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DAVID

THE HERO-KING OF ISRAEL

BY REV. W. J. KNOX LITTLE, M.A.

LONDON: J. M. DENT & CO.

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DAVID

THE HERO-KING OF ISRAEL

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Alinari.

David.

By Donatello. In the Palazzo Martelli, Florence.

DAVID

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THE HERO-KING OF ISRAEL

BY

KL
REV. W. J. KNOX LITTLE, M.A.
CANON OF WORCESTER

LONDON: J. M. DENT & CO.
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J. B. LIPPINCOTT CO.

PREFACE

The following volume is an attempt to put as vividly before the minds of readers as may be, the life and character of one of the greatest heroes of Jewish history. In so short a space, such a work must necessarily be slender. It is hoped, however, that, so far as it goes, it is at least succinct and accurate.

Most of the places which are the scenes of events recorded I have myself visited some years ago, and, with regard to them, have drawn upon my notes and my memories.

I have to acknowledge my obligations to the late Dean Stanley's "Lectures on the History of the Jewish Church"; also to Dr Edersheim's "History of Judah and Israel"; also to Bishop Perowne's learned work on the "Book of Psalms"; also to "The Psalms Chronologically Arranged by Four Friends"; also to Mr Max Müller's "History of Sanscrit Literature" and his "Chips from a German Workshop"; and also to "Two Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of Early Religions," by my beloved and venerated friend and teacher, Dr Church, the late Dean of St Paul's.

Above all these I am grateful to the teaching of

the Sacred Scriptures themselves. It has not been possible for me always to agree with the conclusions of others, to whose teachings I am indebted; nor has it been possible, in a work of such limited extent, to state why I have differed in some points and formed my own conclusions.

I can only hope that even so slight an effort as this may bring before the minds of some, in a more vivid manner, the lights and shadows of a great character, and the marvellous workings of the providence of God.

W. J. KNOX LITTLE.

HOAR CROSS,
Easter 1903.

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CHAPTER I

BETHLEHEM AND JUDAH

The call and the anointing of David to the kingly office was connected with a sacrifice by the prophet Samuel at Bethlehem. Bethlehem was at the time the home of Jesse, the father of David. It is evident that Jesse's family were well known in Bethlehem, and occupied an important position there.[1] This was natural enough as they belonged to the tribe of Judah, and were direct descendants from Boaz and Ruth; and indeed the names both of Bethlehem and Ephratah occur in the genealogies of Judah recorded in First Chronicles.[2]

The Bethlehem of to-day must of course be very different in appearance in many particulars from that with which David was familiar; but the natural features of the place would be much the same. The situation of the little village is now sufficiently striking. It stands on the point of a ridge which advances eastward from the main line of hills. The slopes towards the north-east and the south have terraces

on which are cultivated vines and olives, so that now, even after centuries of oppression under the rule of the Moslem, it retains some right to the name *Ephratah* ("the fruitful"); there is in the centre of the modern village an open space or square, or *piazza*, as it would be called in Italy; on the side nearest the slope of the hills this *piazza* is free from houses, and from it there is an extensive view. The farther end of the *piazza* is bounded by the vast church which covers the birth-place of our Saviour, and to which are attached three great convents of the Latins, Greeks and Armenians.

Bethlehem has many memories connected with David, and striking points in the history of his nation. In the Bible we hear of it first in connection with Jacob's great sorrow, the death of his beloved Rachel; and indeed not far from the modern village, on the Old Jerusalem Road, a little white-domed mosque still marks her grave.[1] To Bethlehem from far across the distant blue wall of the mountains of Moab Ruth had travelled to the little village, and had worked in the valley below it "among the golden corn," for Boaz her kinsman and afterwards her husband.[2] David was Ruth's great-grandson, and it is his name which first made Bethlehem famous. He showed a constant attachment to his birth-place. In his early days he had lived and toiled on the slopes below the little town; and in the wilderness-land farther off, between these hills and the level death-marked basin of the Dead Sea, he had kept his flocks.

Somewhere here he won his boyish victory over the wild beasts that assailed his sheep.[1] Somewhere on these hill-sides and in that desert beyond came to him those thoughts of love for, and trust in, God, which are embodied in so many of the psalms left to the Church, and used in her service still. Not far off in these rocky hills was the cave of Adullam; not far off too the well of Bethlehem, the taste of whose water he never forgot, and for which he longed so rashly on one occasion, and did not long in vain.[2] It was from the territory of Bethlehem that he gave afterwards to Chimham, son of Barzillai, a reward in property as a precious possession from his own native place;[3] and before Bethlehem had attained that immortality which belongs to it in Christian times, from the birth there of a greater than David, it had gained considerable fame from its connection with David the king. It was probably from Bethlehem being his birth-place, and from his love for it and connection with it, that he acquired his strong influence over the tribe of Judah, which made him secure when fleeing from the persecutions of Saul and hiding among the hills of Judah, and also in the early days of his reign at Hebron. There is said to be a Mussulman tradition to the effect that the making of hair-cloths and sack-cloths were the special occupation of his father, Jesse, and that he had derived it from his ancestor Hur, and that in *this* David was also skilled.[4] The name of his mother is not known, though there seems some reason to suppose that she may have been the wife of a Nahash and,

after *his* death, married Jesse. And this would account for the fact that her daughters, his sisters, were older than the rest of the family, and possibly also for the kindnesses received by David from Nahash, king of Ammon, and then from his son.[1]

David was the youngest of the family, probably considerably younger than the rest; we know that neither his father nor his brothers, on a critical occasion, thought of him otherwise than almost a child, and not to be taken any account of. He himself, indeed, made his eldest brother head of the tribe of Judah, which was in accordance with Jewish law and custom.[2] He had certainly two sisters, Zeruiah and Abigail, and as they were considerably older than the rest, their sons would have been somewhere about the same age as David, and were apparently much more intimate with him than his own brothers.

David seems to have inherited the rough and stern "grit" of his race, to which were added many characteristics more human, more beautiful. He may have learnt something of poetry and music in the schools of the prophets, but his wandering life as the youngest boy of the family on the hills and in woods and valleys of Bethlehem roused in him a sense of lofty poetry from the contemplation of nature, as God's own handiwork in every phase of change—terrible or beautiful—by night and day, on earth or sky.

The kingly tribe to which David belonged was of course the tribe of Judah. It was during the settlement of the various tribes in the land of Canaan under

Joshua that this tribe came into prominence. The first real hero of the tribe was Caleb. He was the faithful supporter and friend of Joshua, and his worth had been already recognised by Moses. Joshua and Caleb, at the head of the twelve who had been sent to inspect the land, had remained fixed in their determination to carry out the will of God in its conquest.[1] The valley of Hebron, in which was the rocky cave of Machpelah, where their forefathers lay at rest, attracted their attention. This valley was beautiful with the richest verdure, and marked by the terraces of vineyards, glorious with their splendid grapes. From these came the fine cluster, as a proof of the fertility of the land, which was brought by the faithful and fearless young men to Moses. This valley, which had evidently impressed itself upon his imagination, was the portion which Caleb claimed as his own when afterwards they entered the land.[2] It was the stronghold of the Canaanites, and it would seem that after the rest of the native races were defeated, their chiefs, the giants, the children of Anak, still clung to it. Jacob in his prophetic utterance as to Judah had foretold the lion-like dignity of the tribe; had foretold its kingly power, and that the great king of all—greater than David — should come from that tribe; but he had also said, speaking of this tribe of the kings, that he was

"Binding his foal unto the vine,
And his ass's colt unto the choice vine.
He hath washed his garments in wine,

And his vesture in the blood of grapes:
His eyes shall be red with wine,
And his teeth white with milk." [1]

The prophetic eye of the patriarch Jacob had foreseen the settlement of the tribe of Judah in the rich vine-clad valley of Hebron.

Caleb—a real lion of Judah [2]—won the whole valley and its fastnesses by his indomitable courage.[3] He fought the battle of Kirjath-Arba and drove the inhabitants out, giving to their stronghold the well-known name of Hebron. This became, for many a day, the central citadel of the great tribe. There was another city to the south of Hebron — a place apparently connected with the religious rites of the old inhabitants—which was also taken. Caleb had offered his daughter Achsah as the prize to the conqueror of the place, and Othniel, who appears to have been his nephew, took the fortress, and won the prize.[4] Below the hill on which Kirjath-Sepher or Debir stood, a valley lay, deep and rich and beautiful, possessing —what is so valuable in the east—a bubbling and unbroken stream of water, and on this valley Achsah had set her heart. She demanded and won the gift from her father, which her husband with all his courage as a fighting man had been too shy to ask for.[5]

Holy scripture gives us glimpses of these bold and simple and striking acts of the great leader of the kingly tribe. Judah showed itself bold and lion-like, determined and tender, the great holder of the southern frontier and strongholds and vineyards of

the land, indicating by the prowess of its chiefs in its early history, by its faults and its virtues, something of what afterwards appeared in its noblest of sons—David the singer and the king.

After the time of Caleb and his family the history of the royal tribe is peaceful. But there are few stories even amidst the exquisite, simple stories of the Bible more beautiful than the pastoral tale of Boaz and Ruth, so that all that we learn of the tribe brings before us much of the different sides of the great king's character—his pastoral simplicity, his impulsiveness, his warm-heartedness, and his prowess as a leader of men.

CHAPTER II

THE CALL AND ANOINTING OF DAVID

It has been truly said that "one great part of the history of the Bible is the history of calls, widely different indeed in their circumstances, but alike in this, that they were a claim from almighty God on the will and choice of man for a free and unconditional service. It is the history, too, of the way in which the claim was met." [1]

Among these calls there are few more remarkable than the call of David, and his answer to the divine claim.

Saul had been rejected of God for his disobedience.[1] For a time indeed he remained king until his sin worked out to his sad end; but God had fixed upon another to take his place, and God's prophet, Samuel, was appointed to fulfil God's will and anoint the new king. Samuel did not flinch from the duty laid upon him, although, for the first time, he seems to have had great fear of what the consequences might be from the anger of Saul if the matter were known to him.[2] In Saul's case, however, the reins of government were not immediately taken in hand after the anointing, and so also in the case of David the call and the anointing were private, and it would appear that the first use of these was a solemn intimation and appointment to David to prepare himself for the great work for which God was setting him apart.

By divine guidance the prophet took the sacrificial service at Bethlehem as the occasion for this sacred act. There are interesting inferences which come out from this. There was a sacrificial feast every year at Bethlehem. The Elders of the place were present at it, and probably Jesse was president at the sacrifice and the feast.[3] Unexpectedly the prophet arrived. The Elders of the little town went to meet him. They were not without some fear at his sudden appearance, believing that some sin among them had clouded the divine approval. Samuel, however, dispelled their fears, explaining to them that they also were invited guests at Jesse's house, where the sacrificial feast was to be held.[4] The heifer was killed, and

then there was a pause before the beginning of the feast. There is reason to believe that the pouring out of the oil was a not unusual ceremony connected with the feast.[1] Samuel had received the divine command, but the full bearing of it does not seem to have been entirely revealed to him; it was natural to expect that at such a feast Jesse's family should all be present. Jesse's sons were called upon to pass before the prophet, but as they passed before him one by one, from Eliab the eldest to the last that was present, Samuel was restrained by God's teaching from anointing any one of them. The prophet himself had to learn something, viz., that God's judgment was "Not as what man seeth, for man looketh to the eyes (or outward appearance), but God looketh to the heart." Samuel had imagined that Eliab, of lofty stature and manly beauty, must be the chosen one, but such was not the case. After all had passed, "Samuel said unto Jesse, Are these all thy children? And he said, There remaineth yet the youngest, and behold he keepeth the sheep."

The boy was sent for at once; he took his place with the rest of the family, and the intimation was given by God that upon his head the anointing oil was to be poured. We are left in no doubt as to his appearance. His bearing, his manner, his look, all spoke in his favour. It seems to be implied that he was not so tall as his brother Eliab, nor as Saul the king; his hair was golden,[2] his eyes bright, probably of that deep blue still seen in the descendants of the

tribe of Judah in the east; he had a graceful figure and an open and beautiful countenance; his strength was very great; he was broadly and strongly built; he had the alertness and agility of a vigorous young mountain shepherd, and we know that for activity and swiftness he could be compared to the wild gazelles of the mountains, and that by strength of arm he could break even a bow of steel.[1] "He carried a switch or wand in his hand, such as would be used for his dogs, and a scrip or wallet round his neck, to carry anything that was needed for his shepherd's life, and a sling to ward off beasts or birds of prey." [2]

Jesse and Samuel, and even David himself, do not seem at the moment to have entered fully into the meaning of the anointing. Saul himself had been anointed privately; it was only by degrees that the full meaning and symbolism of the anointing came to be recognised generally. It is interesting to note the kind of—what one may call—sacramental significance in this ordinance. There is clearly a connection in it with the gift of the Spirit of God, who gave power to the anointed one. A change passed upon David in consequence, a change which—amid whatever sins—was permanent.[3] Under similar circumstances a change had passed upon Saul,[4] only that in his case—owing to his disobedience—the divine gift at his anointing became a curse and not a blessing. It is interesting to note, also, how oil seems to have been chosen as a suitable symbol for the action of the Spirit of God. In the old dispensation, as we know, such symbols

were shadows or hints, while in the dispensation of the Incarnation such symbols became channels or means of imparting the grace to be given.

It is interesting also to note the glimpses afforded to us by the narrative of the religious condition of the people at the time. We know that there were "Schools of the Prophets," or places for training young men for special religious duties, and it has been supposed that possibly Jesse, and even David himself, may have looked upon the anointing, which they did not at once fully understand, as a setting apart for something of this sort. Clearly the prophet Samuel seems to have moved about the country for the purpose of taking part in sacrifices and sacrificial feasts, and especially for the purpose of giving religious instruction and keeping alive religion, when things were in an abnormal condition, and the Ark of God was not in its proper sanctuary. It would appear also to be evident from the narrative that Jesse and his family held a prominent position in Bethlehem, and that they were faithful and devoted servants of God.

The atmosphere of a godly home is one of the most powerful helps of a noble and God-fearing character. David was ever breathing this atmosphere in the house of his father. Other things, however, helped to form the "Sweet singer of Israel" to be such as he was at the time of his anointing: his was evidently a healthy, manlike nature; he was inured to a certain amount of hardships in his open-air life on the rugged hills of Bethlehem. He had besides this manly vigour

and endurance, the real spirit of a poet, and a great gift of minstrelsy. To some more dense natures, even when brought in constant contact with nature in her varying moods of sunshine and storm, the outer world seems never to speak at all. Not so with David. Nature to him would seem to have been the outer sign of a sacrament; he felt God and God's power behind all that he saw. The gathering storm, the flashes of lightning, the nightly sky peopled with myriads of stars in the clear brilliance of the east,[1] his sheep at their pasture, the quiet valleys and the rugged rocks—all spoke of God to his religious, poetical, and gentle and reverent mind, while the whole had nothing about it merely sentimental but always a reverent revealing of the Unseen to a strong and loving and manly nature. He acquired the highest attributes of man—modesty and reverence, tenderness and strength.

The real preparation of great minds for any worthy work is found in solitude, and silent communion of the soul with itself and with its God. If hard and exacting work is to be done the real strength, the real source of the power of it comes from this. David, quite young, had learnt like Abraham to be "alone with the Alone." Before any of his great works the mighty Son of David, the Son of Man, betook himself to solitude and prayer.[2] St Paul in after years stored up the forces which he was to expend in such never-ending energy, in his lonely meditations and visions in Arabia;[3] and David was prepared for his

great work by the hours of solitude by night and by day "among the sheepfolds" of his native hills.

There was something, however, more than this which formed part of that preparation. He learnt to bring into action a strong and healthy and muscular frame supported by indomitable courage. With a simple determination and self-reliance and unhesitating promptitude he faced and slew the lion or the bear prowling about to attack his flocks.[1] His strength and prowess would be known in the neighbourhood as well as his gift of minstrelsy, and yet, as in high and reverent natures, no knowledge of, nor praise bestowed upon, these characteristics by others in the least filled him with self-conceit or injured his noble simplicity.

As in after years the piety of his early childhood, and the poetry and meditative habits of his solitary hours stood him in stead, so did his daring courage and swift decisiveness—cultivated in these wild encounters with the bears from the Lebanon and the lions from the Jordan valley.

The picture which rises before us of David when he appeared at the court of Saul is infinitely attractive. Saul from his once noble vantage ground had been steadily falling. He had had noble natural characteristics,[2] but he had shown himself wholly wanting in that deeply religious mind which was the crown of all David's gifts. He had disobeyed God again and again. He had disregarded "mercies and warnings, and providences, and opportunities of grace." He had

given way to wild wilfulness, and held no steady hand upon himself, and at last he was forsaken of the God whom he had despised. He had remorse, but not repentance. He felt himself fallen. He was a victim of disappointed ambition and disappointed hopes. He was a prey to dark thoughts, and "now an angel of evil from the Lord affrighted him" [1] with thoughts and visions of what would come to pass.

Men felt much even in those remote days how music may be powerful to "soothe the troubled breast," and so, when the wretched king seemed most miserable and desperate, he was recommended to try its effects upon him. Saul gave command to seek for a musician. There was a lad in attendance on the king, who may perhaps have been a native of Bethlehem, and he called the attention of the king and his courtiers to the young shepherd musician. "I have seen," he said, "a son of Jesse, the Bethlehemite, cunning in playing and a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the Lord is with him." [2] David was accordingly sent for, and Jesse sent him to the king, giving him the simple presents customary on such occasions in the primitive eastern life: "An ass laden with bread, and a bottle of wine, and a kid." [3] It is evident that David's appearance before the king did not belie the recommendation of the lad at court. In the vigour of youth, with manly beauty, with a clear, open countenance that spoke of a mind reverent and at peace with God, the young shepherd touched the

heart of the gloomy, sin-laden king; the very sight of David must have been to him like the bright light of dawning day after a night of misery and darkness. Personal influence is a strange mystery but a real fact, and the influence of a clear honest God-fearing soul, felt through the power of a manly and noble presence, has some command over even the worst of men. All that remained of Saul's old and better self went out to meet David, and we know in the simple language of scripture that "the king loved David greatly."[1] The noble heart of the young shepherd responded to the love of the king, his sweet music charmed away the dark thoughts that possessed Saul, and for the time, at least, lifted him up to better things. For David, with his "prudent" power of observation, his stay at the court of Saul—interrupted occasionally by visits to his home—gave him experience of the ways of men and of the ruling minds in Israel at that turbulent time. And thus it was that the great warrior king and minstrel had his character formed, and was anointed and called for the work which God appointed him to do.

CHAPTER III

DAVID AND GOLIATH

It would appear that from time to time during his ministry to Saul, David returned to visit his home, and to carry on his ordinary occupations.[2] Those

occupations, however, were interrupted by a striking incident which brought him into notice before all the people of the land. War again had broken out between the Israelites and the Philistines. The Philistines, indeed, were the hereditary enemies of Israel. They represented brute force and insolent pride and heathen worship, as opposed to higher thoughts of duty and justice, and the presence and power of God with His people. The name "Philistine" has been used in modern times, accordingly, to represent stupidity and opposition to light and knowledge and advancement and "sweet reasonableness." It has been supposed, and it is not improbable,[1] that the knowledge of Saul's shaken condition and darkened mind had reached these old enemies of Israel, and had emboldened them to advance into their enemy's territory to no great distance from Bethlehem.

The scene of war was to the south-west of Bethlehem, and was in a ravine or "wady," as it is called in the east, of which there are many in Palestine, sometimes broad, sometimes narrow, often dry in summer weather, but dashing in a wild torrent after heavy rains—such as the "brook Kishon" in the war of Deborah and Barak. The wady in this instance is somewhat broad, and runs from north to south for a few miles. In modern times it is called Wady-es-Sumt, or the valley of Acacias. The camp of the Philistines was pitched on the southern slope of the ravine, between Shochoh (called in modern times Shuweikeh) and Ephes-Dammim (called in modern

times Damum). Ephes-Dammim is a few miles to the north-east of Shochoh. The name Ephes-Dammim signifies "the bound of blood," and may probably have originated in this very battle. It was between these two places that the armies lay.

Things looked bad for the host of Israel. The king was no longer his old vigorous and valiant self; Jonathan seems to have been absent; the people seemed cowed and downhearted; it appeared as if God had forsaken them. It has been truly said that unbelief makes cowards, for indeed faith, not doubt, is the true basis of decided action. Saul did not venture to lead his army to the attack, and every day they suffered the humiliation of being insulted by a challenge which no man dare take up. The insult was a symbol of the insulting attitude of worldliness towards religion. Brute force and power paraded themselves as contemptuous of the power of the Spirit. Religion cannot hold its own against the powers of the world except by spiritual forces and trust in God. When the guardians of religion, or those who should witness to its inward power, fail in this trust, and in using the right weapons, then the world has its way. The symbol in this case is singularly vivid and complete. On the side of the Philistines there was a man of gigantic proportions—Goliath of Gath—sprung from that race of giants which scripture describes as being in the land in the time of Joshua, and having been spared by him.[1] This man was clothed in complete armour. For forty days he advanced out of the ranks

of his army, and challenged any one from the ranks of Israel to meet him in battle, and to allow the result of the fight between the two to decide the position of the two nations as victors or vanquished. Day by day this went on, and day by day no man from the side of Israel dared to take up the challenge. Then, with greater boldness, he even crossed the bed of the brook, and at the sight of him the armies of Israel were filled with terror and fled; the sheer brute force of the world seemed destined to conquer, and trust in God and the power that comes from God to His people who trust in Him to be gone.

But there is another side to the picture. David had been at home at Bethlehem, leading his quiet life and fulfilling his ordinary duties. He was sent by his father to the scene of battle to make inquiries as to his brothers, and to carry them some provisions, together with a present for their leader. He arrived at the "trench," we are told, just as the army was making ready for the battle. The "trench" was some kind of fortification meant as a defence for the camp of Israel, and may probably have been in fact a circle of waggons, or a trench strengthened by such a circle. As he came to the camp he heard the shout for the battle, although, as on previous days, it was a mere shout not followed by an attack. He left what he carried with him with the keeper of the baggage, and himself ran forward to the front. He knew that he would find his brothers there, for that was the position assigned to the tribe of Judah. His

brothers gave him no cordial welcome, but misunderstood him, and Eliab rebuked him for "pride and naughtiness of heart," and discontent with his ordinary duties at home; but David had a larger heart, and was made of stauncher stuff than to dwell upon such petty jealousies and objections. Then with his own eyes he saw the advance of the Philistine champion, and with his own ears he heard the insulting challenge. From one and another, too, belonging to the ranks he learnt what had been going on, and how the king had promised a great reward to any one who would defeat the giant. The manly faith within the fine young soul that loved and trusted God rose into sublime indignation at the insult thus offered by the "uncircumcised Philistine" to the armies of the living God, and to the God whom he trusted and loved. David was led to Saul, and the moody and despairing king was struck by the vigour and daring of the young shepherd. Saul warned him to think how he, a mere youth, was offering to oppose a well-seasoned warrior. David, in answer, told the simple story of his contest with the lion and the bear. Saul's better self seemed to awaken again for a moment. The young shepherd's confident trust in God seemed to overcome him, and the king consented, but at least required that he should be armed with fitting armour. David respectfully submitted for the moment to the king's command, but then pointed out that he must act in other strength, and that such armour could not be used. Besides his own high-spirited courage and boyish

strength and skill, David relied upon other armour. The God he had loved and trusted for so long he knew would be with him, and the Spirit which had been given him so abundantly would not forsake him. It was as if God had been ever saying in his heart what our Lord afterwards said on a memorable occasion, what God has spoken in many hearts in times of trial, "Be not afraid; only believe."[1] Goliath seems to have retired from his usual challenge, which, as usual, had been received with fear, and now he heard that Israel at last had found a champion, and consequently advanced again, but David did not wait for him to cross the wady. He swiftly advanced to meet him, and picked up five stones from the dry bed of the little stream, and these, with the sling in his hand, were the weapons of his warfare. Goliath now saw him plainly, and with scorn and derision took, as he thought, the measure of his opponent. Here was a handsome, fair-haired shepherd boy daring to meet the challenge of him of gigantic strength and splendid armour. He boiled over with insulting scorn. "Am I a dog," he said, "that thou comest to me with staves?" Then he cursed David by all his gods, and told him jeeringly how he would give his flesh to the fowls of the air and the beasts of the field. It was then David's turn to speak, and he spoke with dauntless courage and faith; told him how to his sword and spear and shield he opposed the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom he, unbeliever, had dared to defy. He warned him of what

it was to fight against God, and that God would deliver him into his hand. "I will smite thee," boldly cried the dauntless youth, "and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcases of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the Lord's, and He will give you into our hands."

Such was the defiant answer of an indomitable courage resting on an unflagging faith.

The time of words was over. The time of action had come. The Philistine advanced to meet his youthful opponent. David ran to meet his enemy. With swiftness and accuracy of eye he measured the distance and took his aim; with agility of a practised hand he slung his stone. The aim was exact, the force was powerful, the stone sank into the forehead of the giant. It had pierced his brain; he fell forward apparently dead. David then ran swiftly forward, stood on the Philistine's body, drew the sword from the sheath, and cut off his head. Then there followed a great flight of the Philistines, and a great pursuit of the Israelites, and a great slaughter. After this the spoils were seized by the army from the camp of the Philistines. The armour of Goliath was the only part of the spoil reserved by David for himself. The head of the Philistine was hung up as a trophy at Jerusalem, which was afterwards to become David's own capital;

and thus this striking incident was closed after David "had given," as has been truly said,[1] "a modest account of himself to the jealous king and his chief general." [2]

CHAPTER IV

DAVID AND SAUL

The combat with Goliath seems to have been a turning-point in the history of David. His prowess and success electrified the whole nation, and the Philistines themselves looked upon him as the most powerful man amongst their enemies. It was the custom of the times to welcome the conquerors in different cities, and the poetic expression of joy in which Saul was spoken of as slaying thousands and David tens of thousands, does not seem to have been intended in any way as a disparagement of Saul, but merely an enthusiastic and poetic manner of hailing the hero of the hour. To Saul's darkened mind and uneasy conscience it presented itself in quite another light, and aroused the dreadful spirit of jealousy which henceforth grew and grew in the unhappy king. All sin is ultimately selfishness. It comes from enthroning self on the throne which belongs to God, but jealousy is a specially repulsive form of sin, for it leads a soul to grudge happiness or blessing to another; it darkens the mind and confuses the conscience, and stifles the

better nature, and spreads—if it is allowed to go on—like a leprosy over the whole being. The unhappy king had disobeyed and abandoned God, and this new form of sin intensified his alienation from God. It broke down all remaining fear of God, and possessed the king till it became a perfect mania; and soon his whole thoughts were concentrated on the idea of murdering David.[1]

Up to this time David does not seem to have held any permanent position. He had apparently visited the court in the character of a minstrel. Now, after his victory over Goliath, he seems to have been appointed at first armour-bearer, and then captain over a thousand, and then, perhaps, captain of the body-guard of the king. He was thus second only to Abner, who was what we should call commander-in-chief, and next in his position at court to Jonathan, the king's son. He had a residence of his own, probably on the town wall, and he was in very close attendance on the king.[2]

At one time, as we know, David's music had soothed away the evil spirit within Saul, but now that jealousy was taking possession of him this was no longer the case. On more than one occasion in a sudden access of jealous fury he tried to slay David with the javelin, which was a symbol of royalty placed beside the king. Failing in this, Saul betook himself to craft in order to forward his murderous designs.[3] The promise had been made that the conqueror of Goliath should receive the king's daughter as his wife. It was

intended that he should be married to Merab, the eldest daughter. For some reason or other which is not explained this plan was changed, and Merab was married to one Adriel, of whom we know nothing further. It has been supposed that the reason was that Michal, the king's younger daughter, was proposed to him in her sister's stead, because of her real affection for him, and that, through that affection, the plot against his life might be more easily carried out. After various hints and proposals which did not delude David, a definite offer was made to him that he should be given Michal in marriage if as a dowry David would see to it that he would have a hundred of the heathen enemy at least slaughtered. It had been hoped before by Saul that by sending David to battle there was a fair chance of his falling in the war, but that hope had been disappointed. Now the king imagined that this later demand would lead his rival into more personal danger, where he would probably perish. In this again he was disappointed. David's warlike spirit rose at once to the proposal, and he succeeded in doing twice as much as the king had required. It was necessary that the royal promise should be kept, and Michal was married to David.[1]

The king's madness of jealousy only increased as everything seemed to show that God's blessing was upon the undertakings of his rival. He was now the king's son-in-law. His wife was devoted to him with a real affection. His position was one of great power and dignity, and yet his modesty and prudence saved

him from any act or word on which Saul could fasten. The unhappy king maddened by all this became reckless, and threw off the mask. He spoke openly of David's destruction, and even to Jonathan. Jonathan warned David, but Jonathan himself could hardly believe that it was more than passing frenzy on his father's part. He contrived to remonstrate with him, so that David could hear what was said, and so moved the king's heart at the moment that he himself was reassured, and David, who appears never to have been able to imagine that the king really intended his murder, was also reassured, and presented himself as usual at court.[1]

Notwithstanding this, things grew worse. David had further successes over the Philistines, and this fact aroused the king's passionate hatred more than ever. On one occasion he deliberately flung his javelin at him while he was playing to him on his harp. David eluded the javelin and retired to his own house. His wife with her strong affection and womanly quick-wittedness saw that her husband's life was in real danger, and urged upon him the necessity of flight. Saul's determination to assassinate him was plainly known to his courtiers now, and they were commissioned by the king to entrap him; they failed however through his wife's vigorous action. The house was, probably, as was very usual in the east, on the city wall, and through a window Michal managed that he should be lowered down and so escape. When David was gone and the spies and assassins came to

search the house, Michal had placed in his bed a figure of one of the old household gods, which in spite of divine injunctions, she, like Rachel before her, had kept in her house.[1] This figure she covered in the bed with a coverlet to represent David as being confined to bed from illness.

When the trick was discovered, and she was blamed by her father, she made some sort of excuse. But the trick had succeeded, and David was gone. David fled to Ramah to consult Samuel the prophet, and both of them for greater safety withdrew to Naioth. Naioth was close to Ramah, and was in fact the dwelling-place of a congregation of prophets under the presidency of Samuel. In these later days the tabernacle and the divinely appointed priesthood were in abeyance, and the time of the temple had not yet come. God, however, did not leave His people without religious instruction and means of grace. These congregations of devoted men under the direction of Samuel the prophet were useful not only for study and for preserving historical records, but exercised positive spiritual influence. It would appear that God permitted their spiritual power to be felt by many who came in contact with them, and so showed to the chosen people the reality of their divine appointment, and the real spiritual force that dwelt within them.

Three times did the king send an embassy to Naioth, and each time the messengers sent to seize David were overwhelmed by the spiritual influence

there. In each case these messengers themselves joined in prophesying, "when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as appointed over them." At last Saul determined to go himself, and this wonderful spiritual influence—which seems to have been in some way like the "spiritual gifts" alluded to by St Paul in the church of Corinth, which did not necessarily make men good, though it opened up to them the spiritual world—*this* affected Saul himself even before he reached Naioth. For a day and a night taking off (that is what the expression appears to mean) his outer robe he lay in an ecstasy.[1] Just as in earlier days he had been affected by the influence of a company of prophets and had astonished men, who had seen no spiritual tendencies about him before, so on this occasion he was again affected by God's spirit, perhaps to give the unhappy man one last chance of repentance, so that men said now as they had said then with astonishment, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"[2] It is possible that there was some slightly better intention towards David in the king's mind, but if so it was only temporary. On Saul's approach David had fled from Naioth, but the king seemed to think that matters had been so far cleared up between them that David would appear at court to take part in a sort of festive and semi-sacrificial banquet, which was held at the beginning of the month. The good influence had evidently passed away, and the king had resigned himself to his murderous schemes, and awaited the appearance of

David at the feast in order to put them into execution. His plan, however, as we shall see, was foiled.

CHAPTER V

DAVID AND JONATHAN

If the relations of David to Saul are saddening, few things are more touching in the sacred history or indeed in any history than his relations to Jonathan. In the earlier days of Saul's great achievements, as in his last great defeat, his son was ever with him. He is one of the sweetest and noblest characters brought forward in the ancient scriptures. He first appears prominently before us in a striking act of youthful daring. Things were in confusion in Israel, and the Philistines as usual were harrying the people in every direction. The people were terrified and hiding themselves, and it would appear that it was with difficulty that Saul got his armies together. However, Saul with Jonathan his son had collected an army, and they lay over against the garrison of the Philistines at "the passage of Michmash." "The passage" is now the Wady-es-Suweinit, and is between the ridge of Geba and that of Michmash. There was a sharp conical rock named Bozez, and here was the Philistine outpost. There was another sharp rock opposite this in the Wady called Seneh, on the side

of the Israelites. Jonathan was attended, as was usual, by a young man, his armour-bearer, and he proposed to him to advance to the top of Seneh. Round this rock were masses of underwood and forest, stretching away towards Gibeah, where Saul and the main body were. What we are struck by is Jonathan's dauntless faith and his dauntless courage, and also the affectionate loyalty felt for him by the young man, his armour-bearer. "Come," said he, "and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that the Lord will work for us: for there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few. And his armour-bearer said unto him, Do all that is in thine heart; turn thee; behold, I am with thee according to thy heart." [1]

The sign that Jonathan had settled upon with his armour-bearer to show them if God approved of their enterprise was this: When they appeared at the top of Seneh the Philistines would either tell them to wait and they would come to meet them, or would remain on the top of Bozez and brag in a boastful eastern fashion and challenge them to come on. If they did this, they would know that the Philistines feared that others were behind them coming on also, and that God would deliver them into their hands. The Philistines did brag and challenge them; "and Jonathan climbed up upon his hands and his feet, and his armour-bearer after him; and they fell before Jonathan; and his armour-bearer slew after him." [2] Thus they slew twenty men on a narrow slip of ground within a

distance that would be ordinarily ploughed by a yoke of oxen. From the narrow nature of the path the enemy in front could not see or imagine how many men might be supporting Jonathan and his armour-bearer, and a panic spread throughout the whole host. There was terrible confusion, and the Philistine army melted away. From the heights of Gibeah Saul's outpost had noticed the confusion, and when Saul and those with him came into action the action was entirely a pursuit, and the auxiliaries of the Philistines, who had come over from Israel, they also turned against the enemy and took the side of the king and their country.[1] Numbers had fled in panic when the Philistine armies came against them, and had hidden themselves in rocks and holes. They too took courage and joined in the pursuit, and the battle rolled away as far as Beth-aven.

In Saul, however, there had been one of those wild, almost maniac impulses, which sometimes governed him more and more as he was losing hold of God and high principle. He had induced the people to take a vow against tasting any food until the evening, until his enemies were conquered. It was a rash vow. It was not serious and thoughtful and religious, but there was all the more in his distraught mind, and in that of the people the sense of a terrible obligation. All through that terrible day they had pursued the enemy whilst they themselves were almost fainting with hunger. The people had kept the vow. Jonathan had not known of it, and when he took of the honey

of the wild bees he was in no way morally responsible. When the day of slaughter and the day of fight was over, the people—almost starved with hunger—rushed upon their food. They slaughtered the cattle which were taken; they devoured them in neglect of the law of God, which forbade the eating of flesh with blood in it. Saul had still some sense of responsibility; he reproved the people for what they had done; he made arrangements for a proper slaughter-house, and he built a memorial altar on the spot, by way of expiation. But such formal expiation could have no effect to counteract his rash and irreligious vow. The formalism and shibboleths of much noisy and narrow religionism in our own days will not take the place before God of real and searching repentance.

The people had satisfied their hunger, and the king proposed that the pursuit of the enemy should be renewed. There was an inquiry as to God's will, but no answer came, even though God was approached through the Urim and Thummim. God's most sacred ordinances, as we know, must be approached in a religious spirit and in faith. There had been no faith and no religious spirit in the action of Saul. But Saul was tied by the letter of his vow, and by his narrow thoughts about higher things. He was never a really converted man. He never gave his whole heart to God: that was the great difference between him and David. He would follow God with enthusiasm for a time, and be touched by the prophetic spirit, but again

he relapsed into the ways of the world. His religion was never himself and so—like worldly and respectable religionists—he worshipped, not God, but what suited the temper of the age. At that time and in his case this took a special form of superstition, just as, in worldly and irreligious and ignorant men, it takes that form of superstition which suits *our* time *now*. Saul could get no answer from God on that terrible night at Ajalon, and so he was determined to test the question. In his superstitious rashness, he swore by the Holy Name, that the breaking of the fast by some one should be avenged by death. It has been well said that "it must have been a weird scene as they gathered round the camp fires, and the torches cast their fitful glare on those whose fate the lot was to decide." [1] The king and his son were on one side, the rest of the army on the other, and the lot fell on the king and his son. Again the lot was cast and Jonathan was taken. Then Saul asked Jonathan the solemn question as to what he had done. Jonathan answered exactly the truth, that he had broken his fast, but had done so in entire ignorance of his father's rash vow. Saul, true to his unbending and superstitious folly, decreed that Jonathan should die. It is here that the interest of the story comes in. The people took a higher and a nobler view than that taken by their sin-stricken king. To them it seemed that Saul might or might not have made a rash vow, but one thing was perfectly certain, that God had accepted and owned the action of the brave man who had saved Israel,

and the people would not permit that he should die. We may well believe that Saul was not sorry that his son was delivered by the action of his people from his insensate folly; but what is more remarkable, as making the nobility and sweetness of the character of Jonathan—with whom we are now specially concerned—is this, that he found no fault with his father, whom to the last he loved, and that having done his duty like a man—like a man, if so it had been—he was prepared to die. It was a very noble character. On this occasion the people saved Jonathan from his father's rashness. They would not permit that the noble-hearted young chief should suffer, and possibly Saul's love for Jonathan made him the more superstitiously determined to make the rash vow. "Though it be Jonathan, my son," were the words that he used to emphasise his determination that any who broke their vow should die on the day of Michmash.[1] And Jonathan's faithfulness to his father was equally remarkable. He was always with him. He held a high office at court. It was long before he could get himself to believe the reality of his father's jealousy of David. The king even in his fits of frenzy would at any rate listen to his son,[2] and through the dark days even to the final catastrophe on mount Gilboa he stood by his father, and "in death they were not divided."

It was between this noble, unselfish, and simple-hearted prince and David that there was formed one of the most beautiful and passionate friendships which has ever been recorded. "The soul of Jonathan," we

are told, "was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul."[1] From the moment of the conflict with Goliath Jonathan's heart went out to that of David. As a sign of that friendship that never was to be broken Jonathan gave him his own royal robe, "and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow and to his girdle."[2] In that lofty friendship there was not the faintest touch of jealousy. Jonathan had begun to feel that David was his father's rival in a very real sense. He cared nothing for such rivalry. He faced the fact that David was certain to be king, but it made no sort of difference to either of them. They *loved* one another, and that was all. It was long before David could believe that Saul really meant his destruction, but after the affair at Naioth he felt convinced that it was so.[3] Still Jonathan could not believe it, and David with his great love for him placed himself wholly in Jonathan's hands. He could not find that he had done anything to deserve Saul's hatred, but if he had done wrong he was not unwilling to die. "If," he said to Jonathan, "there be in me iniquity, slay me thyself."[4] There was to be a feast at which David's presence would be expected by Saul, and it was arranged by the two friends, who walked out together to the field in order to escape notice, that when Jonathan apologised for David's absence to his father he should judge according to the character of his father's answer and let David know. The scene in "the field" is sufficiently touching. In their con-

versation there, Jonathan clearly showed his foresight as to the rise of his friend and his own fall, but throughout all he was perfectly faithful to his friend, and only besought him that when he came into power he would not only show him kindness, if still alive, but also show kindness to his descendants.

A signal was then arranged between them by which Jonathan was to inform him of the result of his interview with his father. That interview took place at the feast. On the first day the king noticed David's absence, but put it down to some legal obstacle and said nothing. On the next day, however, he inquired the cause, and in a manner which left no doubt as to his rancour against David. When Jonathan made the excuse with which David had provided him, the king's fury knew no bounds. He insulted his son, and warned him that his mad affection for David would be the ruin of himself and his family. He openly ordered him to be sent for, for the purpose of murdering him, and when Jonathan in answer generously and frankly pleaded his cause, the king was so frenzied with rage that he raised his javelin for the purpose of striking Jonathan, as he had tried to strike David. Jonathan left the feast in indignation and sorrow, and on the following morning he went to the place appointed, with his bow and arrows, and accompanied by the lad who bore them. It was arranged that he should shoot three arrows, and that if they were lying nearer than where the lad had gone to fetch them, David was to understand that things were safe, but that if he

ordered the lad to go farther David was to understand that his only safety lay in flight. As a matter of fact this of course was the case. After the signal had been given and understood, Jonathan sent back the lad to the city, and he and David were left for a moment alone. It was a bitter parting; both of them knew that a terrible cloud hung over, and that it was quite probable that they might never meet again. Not many words were said for things were urgent and the danger of delay was great, but as they embraced each other bitter tears were shed. They were manly tears, the tears of two strong and brave men who loved each other with all their hearts. There was a renewal of their vows of friendship, and then they parted.[1]

Their paths now lay apart, for Jonathan stood faithfully by, and did his best for, his wretched father; and David had many and terrible wanderings and vicissitudes, but the great love that they bore to each other never changed, and when the final tragedy took place David had still a generous feeling for the king who persecuted him, but above all a passionate sorrow for the loss of his friend, the prince. This is shown in his beautiful lament over Saul and Jonathan. He never allows himself there to dwell upon the dark days of Saul's decline, but generously only thinks of the Saul of earlier days; but the real heart-breaking and passionate sorrow comes out when he thinks of his dear dead friend:—

"Oh Jonathan, on thy high places thou wast slain!

I am distressed for thee, my Jonathan, my brother.
Pleasant hast thou been to me, exceedingly!
Wonderful was thy love to me, passing the love of women
How are the mighty fallen!
And perished the weapons of war!" [1]

CHAPTER VI

DAVID'S WANDERINGS [2]

David was now an outlaw. When he parted from Jonathan, he knew well that nothing could protect him from the wrath of Saul but flight. His first journey for rest and protection and guidance was to Nob. It lies north of Jerusalem, and not very far from it. Here was a settlement of the Priests. Here, since Shiloh had fallen, were collected the descendants of Eli. They were eighty-five in number, and with them were settled their families and their flocks and herds. Ahimelech was the great-grandson of Eli; he was a man of advanced years, and with him was associated his son Abiathar. David's flight, it is probable, was not direct, but by a circuitous route, and at night. He reached this settlement of the Priests

on a Sabbath morning. To find the son-in-law of the king in the sorry plight in which he presented himself—unarmed and hungry and weary—naturally aroused the suspicions of Ahimelech.

Holy scripture is always frankly true—unlike uninspired books—as to the faults of its heroes and saints. It does not conceal from us that David acted in this emergency more according to what is called diplomacy than according to truth. He pretended that he had come on urgent business from the king. The Priests—in the then degraded state of the kingdom—had not much to offer for his support. They had only the Shew Bread, which, strictly speaking, could not be eaten except by the Priests. On the supposition that David's statement was true, and that he was acting as a king's messenger, the law of charity—as our Lord, referring to this matter, afterwards taught — was a higher thing than the strict Levitical rule. Indeed, had Ahimelech known the whole truth, and that David was flying for his life, under unjust persecution, he would have been perfectly justified in sustaining him with the Shew Bread. David also needed a weapon to defend himself with, and he persuaded the High Priest to give him the sword of Goliath. Whatever excuses may be made for David's "diplomacy," Ahimelech acted in good faith, and has the special commendation, as we have noticed, of our Lord. It is also to be noted that David's cause was undoubtedly a good one, that he asked for God's guidance and received it, and that it was quite con-

trary to his nobility of character intentionally to bring any trouble upon the house of the Priests.

David had probably no great following with him at that time, but there were friends, if not with him, at least about and ready to support him. This seems to be implied in the narrative. There was one, however, at the Sanctuary at the time who was hostile to David. David himself had a shrewd suspicion of it, though he had no idea of what would be the terrible consequences. Doeg, the Edomite, for some reason or other, was at Nob at the time. Doeg was chief over the herdsmen of Saul; he reported the whole matter to Saul shortly afterwards, and this led to one of Saul's blackest crimes—a frightful massacre. The infamous Doeg himself was made the executioner of every one of the Priests, who were all put to death, and then Saul in his ungovernable fury utterly destroyed the city of the Priests, "both men and women, children and sucklings, and oxen, and asses, and sheep, with the edge of the sword." The conduct of Doeg, it has been thought with great probability, is referred to in Psalm vii. Only one escaped from that horrible massacre; that was Abiathar, the son of Ahimelech. He joined David in his wanderings, and David, touched with horror at the sufferings of his family, said to him, when he joined him, "Abide thou with me, fear not; for he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life; but with me thou shalt be in safeguard." [1] Saul's suspicious and frenzied condition of mind probably led him to imagine that there was a conspiracy of the Priests against him,

which was not to be borne, and hence his savage deed. David kept his word to Abiathar, and under David he became High Priest.

It was necessary now for David to go farther afield, and he fled with those who were with him to Gath in Philistia. He may have done this partly because Saul could not pursue him there, and partly because it might seem probable that the Philistines would welcome so valuable a deserter from the ranks of Israel. If David was reckoning on this he was mistaken. The Philistine lords urged upon Achish, the king of Gath, the danger of harbouring such an outlaw, who, whatever his pretences, was in reality their enemy. He was seized and imprisoned, and would probably have been put to death,[1] but that he feigned madness. There is a solemn and awful feeling in the east with regard to madness which amounts almost to reverence, under the impression that in a state of madness the soul is possessed by unseen powers.[2] In consequence of this David was set free and was again a fugitive.

It has been pointed out that a series of Psalms—lix., vii., lvi., xxxiv., lvii., lii., cxlii. and liv.—refer to this period of David's trials, and express his feelings in the order of those trials. They all show his entire trust in God, his sense of the injustice of the persecution to which he was subjected, and his complete surrender to God's will.[3]

David was now driven from Philistia and back to the regions of Israel. Not far from Gath, as we know, was the wady which had been the scene of his great

conflict with Goliath. Somewhat to the south of this ravine there are rocky hills pierced every here and there with numbers of caves. Nearer to these hills lay the ancient town of Adullam—referred to in the ancient scriptures in various ways. This is said to be represented by the modern Aid el Mia. In the large cave of Adullam David now sought shelter. He was not far from Bethlehem, and here all sorts of people joined him, not so much as rebels against Saul or the kingdom, but as men who were determined to resist the Philistines under the only capable leader of the time.[1] Saul's godlessness and frenzy were ruining the nation. He was absorbed by a passion of jealousy and murder, directed against his most powerful adherent. He was deserted of God, and naturally he was unable to defend the country. To the cave of Adullam, then, all who felt aggrieved at the state of Israel, flocked, so to speak, to David's standard. It would appear from the account given in the Chronicles that they were right valiant men, and it has been thought that it was at this time that David's close connection with his nephews, the sons of his sister Zeruiah, began. Abishai, the brother of Joab, is especially mentioned at the time.[2]

First of all, however, David had to think of his aged father and mother; he accordingly left the cave of Adullam and crossed the Jordan, and committed his parents to the protection of the king of Moab, whose protection he could ask for them well in consequence of his own deseent from Ruth.[3] He then

entrenched himself with his followers, who had now grown to a large number, probably on a mountain height, on the western side of the Abarim, which was in fact in all probability Mizpah Moab, which overlooked Jericho, and is connected in our minds with the affair of Balaam. It seems to have been here that Gad joined David, to whom he was ever after faithful as his "seer" and adviser in religious matters.

It was perhaps now, whilst descending from these hills with his bands of men around him, that the Philistines invaded the valley of Rephaim. They were probably raiding the harvest; David had reached a fastness hard by, and the enemy were in Bethlehem. David was seized with a passion of home-sickness, and longed to taste of the waters of Bethlehem, which he remembered so well. Three of his followers started at once, forced their way through the enemy, and brought back the precious water. When it came he refused to drink of it, but poured it on the ground as an offering to the Lord. He could not bear to touch that which had been won at the risk of the lives of three brave men. This is one of those beautiful episodes in scripture which brings out at once the human side and the loftiness and nobility of his character, and the fascination which he exercised over those around him, which drew out such wonderful devotion.[1]

It was shortly after this, probably, that David, guided by Gad the seer, fell back again upon the hills of Judah, and sought shelter in the forest of Hareth.[2]

Close on the boundary line, not far from this place, seems to have been the town of Keilah. The Philistines had made a raid into the neighbourhood, and David had determined to go to the relief of Keilah. David's followers had feared this expedition lest it should place them in the power of Saul. However, an inquiry was made, and God directed him to go to Keilah. The place and the neighbourhood were relieved, but David and his band were in great danger, as Saul believed that being in a walled city he could easily entrap them. David's "intelligence department," however, was now quite as good as Saul's, and, what was better still, they had an absolute trust in God, and knew that they were doing God's work. It was necessary to escape from Keilah, and henceforth there were wanderings of the most trying and dramatic kind.[1]

There is a district of considerable extent between the Dead Sea and the hills of Judah. It is known by different names, as, "the wilderness of Ziph," or "the wilderness of Maon." First of all the wandering chief found himself in that tract of country known as the wilderness of Ziph, some little distance south-east of Hebron.[2] There is a high hill—what would be called a *kopje* in South Africa—rising south of this, and solitary. This is the hill of Hachilah, and here he took up his quarters, finding cover under the brushwood which clad the hill. The touching point in this part of David's wanderings was that here was his last meeting with his beloved Jonathan.[3] It must

have been a danger to Jonathan of no common kind thus to visit his friend. They loved each other, however, and such love of friend to friend as that of David and Jonathan overcomes all difficulties. Jonathan clearly saw that David was right, and scripture tells us that he "strengthened his hand in God," [1] but full of love as he was to his beloved friend he was as faithful to his father, whom he knew to be in the wrong, as David himself was faithful to the unhappy king, who persecuted him so unjustly. Probably there is no picture anywhere in scripture, or indeed in the history of mankind, more moving than the picture of these two noble-minded men. Jonathan foresaw what was coming. He could not close his eyes to his father's madness. He desired indeed once again to see his beloved friend, and expressed a pathetic hope that he might be allowed yet to stand by him when he should be king.[2] That hope was never to be realised. Jonathan's sense of honour and faithfulness to duty carried him on to stand by his father, even in his ruin, to the last, but the farewell was the farewell of friends, who had to part and had to suffer, but whose love was consecrated by their devotion to duty and their love of God.

CHAPTER VII

DAVID'S WANDERINGS—*continued*

But as yet the wanderings of the outlaw chief had not come to an end. Some of his own tribesmen betrayed him to Saul. David was in the greatest danger. The men of Ziph, who had betrayed him and informed the king of his whereabouts, proceeded to help the king in surrounding David. He, however, had full information, and, none too soon, descended from the mountain top or *kopje* near Maon. Saul had intended to surround David and his followers, and he had very nearly succeeded. But he did not quite succeed. David heard in time, and descended one side of the hill while the king was advancing up the other. At the same time, in David's favour, came the news of an advance of the Philistines, which obliged the king hastily to retire. The hill from which David retired when Saul failed to surround him was ever after called the "cliff of escape."[1]

There is nothing more remarkable perhaps than the wild passion of fury and jealousy which, in spite of the inroads of the Philistines, possessed Saul, and turned him from the real work of his kingship to his murderous madness against David. When he had time to turn from the national enemy he at once returned to his pur-

suit of his rival.[1] David was now no longer in the wilderness of Maon. He had marched with his followers to the north-west. Engedi [2] was so named from a fine spring which was visited by the wild goats, which, in goat-like fashion, sprang from rock to rock down the precipices of the hill range near the Dead Sea. David, and those who were with him, had retired into one of the great caves which mark these hills. They are wild weird mountains and wild weird caves, and into these caves, as we have said, David and his men had retired. Saul and his followers had followed, not knowing that David and his men were there. Saul had spread his mantle on the ground, and lain down to sleep, little suspecting who were in the cave. It was difficult for David's followers to conceive why their leader should not take the advantage which was offered to him and slaughter his persecutor. But David was made of different mould from those who followed him, and he would not lay a hand upon Saul. He had a deep sense of religion, of absolute duty, and with this for a really religious man nothing, however tempting, can ever come in the way. He cut off a part of the robe of the king. He found it hard to restrain his followers; but he did restrain them; he would not play a base part; he would not touch the "Lord's anointed." He insisted on sparing Saul when he might have slain him. He then ascended a peak of rock and spoke, and Saul heard and saw the man whom he had so cruelly persecuted, and who had spared his life. David spoke in strong loving language, begged the king to realise

the awfulness of the calumnies which had been heaped upon him, to realise his danger, and how he had resisted the suggestion of murder. He burst into the language of his true affection, more deeply felt because so cruelly wronged; he showed the king the part of his mantle which he had cut off, as a plain proof of that, which any sane man would accept, of his innocence. He reminded the king that he had absolutely refused to avenge himself, even at the time of the utmost peril and when he had the chance, and asked him, under such circumstances, what could be the meaning of this cruel persecution.

Even into the soul, the benighted soul, of the miserable Saul, such words—so honest, so manly, so strong—penetrated for the moment. He owned that he was wrong. It was a passing flash of remorse in a darkened mind, not a deep and serious repentance, but for the time the worst was passed. It is interesting to notice the real affection which seemed to exist between these two men. David could never put aside his love for the king, and the king could never altogether drown his admiration and his old affection for David.[1]

It was at this time that Samuel died. He was mourned by all Israel.[2] It has been said of him that he was a link between a Past which could never return, and a period of new development of God's kingdom among the chosen people, and that he himself may be said to have been a kind of John the Baptist, preparing the way for a newer state of things. It has been

supposed also, and not improbably, that as our Lord withdrew Himself on hearing of the death of St John the Baptist, so the news of the death of his old friend may have been one reason for David retiring farther south to the wilderness of Paran.[1] Here he was able to be of some use in protecting the flocks and herds of the shepherds of his people from the raids of their enemies. In this way some of his men had had to do with a man of wealth who lived in Maon, but who had his chief place for his pastoral work in Carmel, north-west of Maon. It was the time of the sheep shearing, and a time, according to the custom of the country, of festivity and gladness. Owing to the protection given by David and his men to the shepherds of the district, everything had gone well at the sheep shearing, and the proprietor had suffered no loss in spite of the unsettled state of the country. This man is known to us in scripture under the name of Nabal, which signifies the "Fool," and may probably have been merely a nickname. He had acquired this title because he was churlish and wrong-headed and obstinate and rough. His wife's name was Abigail. She was very different from her husband, was possessed of tact and courtesy, had a good understanding, and pleasant manners, and a beautiful face. After the successful end of the sheep shearing David sent a very courteous message to Nabal, congratulating him upon his prosperity and expecting him, as indeed was only right and according to eastern custom, to give some assistance in the way of supplies, which they sorely

needed, to himself and his men, who had protected him.[1]

The answer was churlish and insulting, and David's wrath was great. He took four hundred men with him, and vowed to destroy Nabal and his people. Abigail had not heard of her husband's insulting answer at the time it was given, but one of her people had overheard it and told her. Abigail lost no time. She clearly saw the impending danger. She sent forward a handsome present and followed immediately herself. "And it was so, as she rode on the ass, that she came down by the covert of the hill, and behold, David and his men came down against her, and she met them."[2] She alighted from her ass and at once appealed to David; she argued that Nabal was not worth considering, that he was fool by name and fool by nature, but she herself could not be considered guilty as she had not known of what had happened at the time. She then spoke in a higher strain, and called David to think that it was by God's goodness that she had been sent to hold him back from blood guiltiness, and, what was more, to prevent him from taking vengeance into his own hands, which was really to be left to God. She spoke in a prophetic strain of her confidence in David's final success and the destruction of Saul and David's enemies. "Thine enemies shall He sling out from the hollow of the sling," because David's cause was not a mere private cause, but the cause of God Himself; she begged him to think how well it would be for him when his day

of triumph came not to have upon his conscience the shedding of blood for a merely personal quarrel.[1]

David's nobler nature and his conscience were now fully aroused. He saw at once how he had been hindered from a great sin, and with his truly religious heart he thanked God for it, and thanked the good and wise woman who had been an instrument in God's hands for his deliverance. The danger had been averted, and the rest of the story is shortly told. On Abigail's return she found her husband engaged in drunken revelry. It was useless to speak to him on the subject that night, but in the morning she explained to him what had happened. The shock seems to have been great to the hardly sobered man; he had a severe seizure, and about ten days afterwards he died, or as scripture states it, "His heart died within him, and he became as a stone. And it came to pass, about ten days after, that the Lord smote Nabal that he died."[2] On hearing of the fate of Nabal, David sent his servants to Carmel to propose to Abigail that she should become his wife. This proposal she accepted. "And Abigail hasted, and arose, and rode upon an ass, with five damsels of hers that went after her, and she went after the messengers of David, and became his wife." Saul had meantime, with cruel heartlessness, given David's wife Michal to be the wife of Phalti, or Phaltiel, a man of Saul's own tribe of Benjamin, and had thus severed the last link that bound David to him. About the same time also David took another wife, named Ahinoam of Jezreel,

a town in Judah, not the northern Jezreel. In this way his position would appear to have been strengthened by being connected with two powerful families of that district.[1]

After this David seems to have advanced farther north, and again appears in the wilderness of Ziph. Again the inhabitants of Ziph tried to betray him to Saul, and Saul advanced against him with three thousand men. He and his army encamped somewhere on the hill Hachilah, and David, accompanied by Ahimelech the Hittite and his own nephew Abishai, determined to find out where the king and his army exactly were. On creeping up the hill they were able to overlook the camp, and beneath them lay Saul and his forces. The whole army, including the king, were wrapped in the deepest sleep. Then David, accompanied by Abishai, went down across the valley and noiselessly into the centre of the camp. They found the king fast asleep with the royal spear stuck into the ground and a cruse of water beside him at his head, and near him was Abner, the captain of the host, and all around the men at arms. On standing by the sleeping king Abishai entreated him to allow him to slay his enemy at once. It should be done at one blow; he would not have to strike twice. David would not permit it. He had done the king no wrong; the king had unjustly persecuted him, but he was king, and David would not stain his hands with the blood of the Lord's anointed. Deeper and deeper, through his many trials, had grown his trust in God.

He felt more and more confident that he was the champion of God's cause, and not merely fighting "for his own hand." He must have become more and more aware after the affair of Nabal and the conversation with Abigail that the great body of the people had begun to realise that he and not Saul would triumph. He was convinced now, more than ever, that God would fight his own battles and defend the right. "The Lord," he said, "shall smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall descend into battle and perish. The Lord forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the Lord's anointed." [1] He directed Abishai, however, to take the spear and the cruse of water, and carrying these they returned across the valley; and David shouted to Abner and twitted him for not having taken proper care of his master in permitting Abishai and himself to approach him so closely. Abner heard, but Saul heard also; the old affection seemed to rise again, and again his heart was touched at David's generosity in sparing his life. He professed the repentance which for a moment he doubtless felt; declared that he had played the fool; asked David to return, and promised that he should not be harmed in the future.[2] David, however, by this time knew the value of Saul's passing penitence, and the unstable character of his reawakened affection. He made a last appeal to him, urging upon him repentance and sacrifice if his cruel persecution of him was the result of the promptings of a spirit of evil, and declaring to him that if it arose from his attention to

the calumnies of the wicked, God's judgment would rest upon those who had so unjustly roused the king against him. One of Saul's young men was allowed to come and fetch back the spear and the cruse, and then these two—Saul and David—between whom there had been such a warm affection—so cruelly thrown away by the jealous folly of the king—parted from one another never to meet again.[1]

After parting with Saul thus for the last time David once more went with his followers to Achish, king of Gath. He was now not a lonely outlaw, but followed by a fine body of men. He received a warm welcome in consequence, and remained for a time in the city. The king of Gath, however, soon assigned to him Ziklag. This was a city which had once belonged to Judah, and then to Simeon, and then probably had fallen in the course of various wars into the possession of the Philistines. From this place he made various raids upon heathen tribes. He gave to Achish from time to time a fair share of his plunder, but there is no doubt that he exercised considerable "diplomacy," and that whilst he was supposed by Achish to have broken entirely with his own country, and to have been carrying on inroads against Israel, he was doing nothing of the kind.[2]

The consequences of such "diplomacy," *i.e.* of carefully manipulated untruthfulness, are not always what may be expected by the diplomat himself. The great chieftain was now trusted by Achish, and he wished for David and his men to accompany him in the war

which was now breaking out between himself and Saul. The Philistine forces met at a place called Aphek, and when David and his division were seen with Achish, the other leaders of the Philistines raised a protest. Achish maintained that David and his men would be faithful to him, but he was obliged to give way to the remonstrances of the other lords of the Philistines, and so, although in the most friendly terms, ordered David and his men to leave the army in the early hours of the following morning. This accordingly the great chieftain did, and he must have felt a sense of real relief at being extricated by the providence of God from the possibility of fighting against his country.[1] When he and his followers, however, reached Ziklag, there was an awful sight before them. The Amalekites had come up in his absence, and revenged themselves upon him for the many raids he had made against them. The city had been burnt by fire. All their wives and children, their flocks and herds, had been carried away. The spirit of mutiny and indignation spread through his men. They probably had been angry with him for leading them to Aphek and then having to turn back, and now in their fury and sorrow, after a wild outbreak of weeping in the manner of Orientals, they proposed to stone their leader. Never did David's strength of character and real religion come out more distinctly. The Bible tells us, "He strengthened himself in the Lord his God." He then inquired of the Lord through the priest, and God directed him to pursue

the fugitives. He lost no time. They advanced by forced marches, and when they reached "the brook Besor," a stream south of Gaza, two hundred of his men, from fatigue and hunger, were so worn out that he was obliged to leave them behind. Those who advanced, however, soon came upon an Egyptian slave, who had been left by the Amalekites in their flight, on the wayside half dead. By a little care and food the man was soon revived, and agreed, when once his safety and freedom were guaranteed to him, to guide the pursuers to the camping-ground of the Amalekites. It was twilight when David and his men found and surrounded them, quite unprepared as they were for the surprise. They had looked forward to a night of feasting and debauchery, but they found it a time of terrible vengeance. All through the night and well into the next day the infuriated pursuers slaughtered the miscreants who had carried away their wives and children. Everything that had been taken was recovered. The wives and children were rescued before there had been time to do them any injury, and the flocks and herds of the enemy were now given to the successful chieftain as his part of the booty. Only four hundred "boys" who took charge of the camels had managed to escape.[1]

As the victorious followers of the great leader returned towards Ziklag they came up with the two hundred men who had been too weak to advance with them. As the stronger men had been angry and depressed in their misfortunes, so they were now

insolent and cruel in their triumph. They proposed that nothing should be given to their comrades who had been unable to march with them, except indeed their wives and children. But David would have none of it. He showed himself on this as on so many occasions a true *ἀνὰξ ἀνδρῶν*—a king of men. Over his wild band of followers he held a strong hand, and maintained a real discipline. He insisted that his orders should be obeyed, and that their comrades should receive back all that had belonged to them. His was a guiding mind and a dominant character, and as in the case of the previous mutiny, so now the most undisciplined of this "scratch corps" of Orientals felt that he must be obeyed. We have known such astonishing influence exercised over men and over wild and ungovernable men by sheer force of character even in our own times, and with it there was joined in David's case, as in more modern instances, extraordinary gentleness and real strength of religious "integrity" and "perfectness of heart." David also, after this trying episode in his wanderings, showed his generosity and wisdom, as well as his faithfulness, to those who had stood by him, by sending presents from the spoil he had acquired to the various cities of that part of the country where he had so long been an outlaw, and who had stood by him as friends.[1]

At the moment of David's success against the Amalekites and his return to Ziklag, having recovered his own family and the families of others from the hands of the spoilers, decisive events were taking

place in the north, though then he did not know it, which were destined to mark the close of his wanderings.

CHAPTER VIII

DAVID THE KING

The battle of Gilboa really settled the question between the two great rivals. It was one of those turning-points in history that are marked for ever. While David was carrying on his attack on the Amalekites, Saul and his army had been attacked by the Philistines. The ground was fiercely contested. There was no cowardly giving way on the part of Saul or his sons or his forces; the armies of Israel fought with stubborn determination, but they were driven to yield, so to speak, inch by inch, and at last they fell back from Jezreel to mount Gilboa. Saul's three sons were slain, and among them of course Jonathan, the noblest of them all. Saul himself was driven to retreat up the sides of mount Gilboa. What remained of his army was also in full retreat, and the archers of the enemy had found him and come up with him, and he knew that the last moment had come. Still there was this remaining nobility about him, he would die as a king. He was determined not to fall into the hands of the

detestable enemy, and he begged his armour-bearer to thrust him through. The armour-bearer dare not do it. He would not raise his hand against the "Lord's anointed"; so different was the feeling then, from that of some in later days at the time of the fall of the second of our Stuart kings. If the armour-bearer dared not do the work of death then Saul himself must try to do it. He fixed his sword in the ground, and threw himself upon it with the courage of despair. Probably he was not quite dead, when a fierce Amalekite (hoping most unwisely, as we shall see, for a reward of his wickedness) slaughtered the king.[1]

It was a great day for the Philistines when on the following morning they found the corpses of the king and his sons. It was a triumph, repeated again and again in the partial triumph of more modern Philistines, when the Church, punished for her failures, has suffered at the hands of unbelievers. The head of the king was cut off and placed in the temple of Dagon at Ashdod. His armour and the armour of his brave sons also, after being shown in the Philistine cities, was placed in the temple of Ashtaroth at Bethshan; and, worse still, on the gates of that city were hung the stripped and broken bodies. News of this catastrophe was carried across the Jordan. Jabesh-Gilead was a city which Saul had delivered in his earlier and brighter days. Everything seemed dark enough now, but the brave men of Jabesh-Gilead had not forgotten the past; all through the night they marched to

Bethshan, they took down the bodies quietly and reverently, laid them to their last rest away from the insulting Philistines, and then kept their feast as a public mourning.[1]

David and his men had returned from Ziklag only three days before, and there must have been anxiety among them, for all knew that a great struggle had been going on with the Philistines. The news of the tragedy reached them from a stranger, an Amalekite, who declared that he had fled straight from Gilboa, and asserted that by Saul's own request he had been the slayer of the king. He brought with him the crown and the arm-band and presented them to David. It is not improbable that the story was untrue, except in so far as the fact that he had dealt the death-blow and had spoiled the dead body of the king. David seems to have believed his statements, but was horrified at his audacity. The man seemed to imagine that to kill Saul would be an act pleasing to him—to him who had spared Saul so often when in his own power. He was horrified at the crime of daring to lay hands upon the Lord's anointed. He immediately had the self-accused murderer put to death.[2] It is part of the nobility of David's character, in spite of all his sufferings at the hands of the dead king, that his grief was very deep and sincere. That deep grief broke out in one of the noblest odes of sorrow ever written by a poet. It is a most striking thing that in that ode there is not the faintest allusion to the personal troubles caused to him who wrote :—

"The wild roe, O Israel, on thy high places is slain;
How are the mighty fallen!
Tell it not in Gath, proclaim it not in the streets of Askelon,
Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice,
Lest there be triumph for the daughters of the uncircumcised!
O Mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew nor rain upon you!
Nor fields of the offerings of firstfruits,
For there defiled is the shield of the heroes,
The shield of Saul, no more anointed with oil!
From blood of the slain, from fat of the mighty
The bow of Jonathan turned not back,
And the sword of Saul returned not empty.
Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives
And in their death they were not divided,
Than eagles were they swifter, than lions more strong.
Daughters of Israel, weep over Saul,
Who clad you in purple, with many delights,
Who put ornaments of gold on your clothing!
How are the heroes fallen in the midst of the battle,
O Jonathan on thy high places wast thou slain,
Woe is me for thee, my Jonathan, my brother,—
Pleasant hast thou been to me, exceedingly!
Wonderful was thy love to me, passing the love of women.

Alas, the heroes are fallen,—
And perished are the weapons of war." [1]

This is one of the noblest odes in any language, but, besides that, it is interesting in many ways. It reminds us of the greatness of Saul as a soldier; of the nobility and faithfulness of Jonathan as a son. It touches incidentally on the fact that Jonathan had been the prince of archers, that he had taught the tribes of Israel the use of the bow. It draws attention to that noble friendship by which the hearts of two such men as David and Jonathan were knit together with a love that neither distance nor death could sever, and that survived every temptation to rivalry, and that surpassed even the deep devotion of the noblest women. About it also there is a touch of the soldier's sorrow that those who were above all things capable of holding their own in the wild hill country, were actually slain in that country, by Philistines, Amalekites—or Bedouins as we should call them—who were only fighters on the plains. "O Jonathan, on thy high places (among thy mountains) thou wast slain." Besides all this, what is more to the point with us, this splendid ode of sorrow reveals to us the unshaken loyalty, the deep affectionateness, the poetic power,—expressing itself in appropriate words—of the minstrel-king.

But in spite of sorrow, as usual came work and duty. There still lived a son of Saul. We do not know whether he was the youngest or not. Abner,

Saul's uncle, had been his commander-in-chief; he took Saul's son, Ish-Bosheth, across the Jordan to Mahanaim, and here gathered those who were on the side of Saul, and probably cleared the country of the Philistines there.[1] At last Abner advanced to Gibeon, probably at least to appear to place Ish-Bosheth on the throne of his father. Joab with David's best troops advanced to meet them, and on the eastern side of Gibeon they met. Abner proposed that twelve young men from either army should engage in combat to decide the quarrel. So bitter and so furious was the feud that each one on either side was killed, and then the two armies joined battle. Abner's army was totally defeated at Gibeon, with great slaughter, and the pursuit ceased only at the falling of the night. There was one terrible incident in the bloodshed of that day. Asahel was Joab's youngest brother, and David's nephew. Like all of the race of Jesse, he was lithe, and fleet of foot, and filled with courage. He pursued Abner on foot, and had the wild ambition to be the one to slay him. When Abner saw the young man following him, he seems to have behaved with great generosity; he advised him to gratify his ambition by carrying off the armour of some of his men at arms. But Asahel was intoxicated with battle, and young and heedless. Abner, in self-defence, struck back at him, and the young man was mortally wounded, and in the most painful place, in the stomach, and his writhing in agony and final death only embittered the feeling of the two armies.[2]

After this there followed protracted war. Abner at length determined to move to the side of David. He had taken Rizpah to be his wife, and this insult roused the spirit of even so weak a man as Ish-Bosheth. Abner, however, was determined on his course, and opened negotiations with David. David was willing to hear terms, but on one condition, namely, that the insult offered to him by taking his wife Michal from him should be at once undone. To this Ish-Bosheth agreed, and Abner brought Michal to Hebron accompanied by an embassy. They made terms with David; they were received with honour and departed to carry out the arrangements made.[1] Joab, however, had been absent at the time, and on his return was indignant with David for having made any terms with Abner. He sent swift messengers after Abner, and lured him to his fate, and murdered him with great treachery. Joab and his brother Abishai professed to be only "the avengers of blood," but that deceived no one. The people were indignant at the murder, and so was David himself; he proclaimed a public mourning, and the reckless murderers, the sons of Zeruiah, were obliged to take part in it, although they were so powerful that David seems to have been unable to punish them further, and David's evident sorrow, sincere and real for Abner's cruel fate, won to him still more the hearts of the people and established him on the throne.[2]

This was finally brought about by the murder of Saul's remaining son, the weak and unfortunate Ish-

Bosheth. He had never indeed been fit to be king; he had merely been a tool in the hands of Abner, but now that Abner was dead, "certain captains of bands," probably commanding the body-guard of Ish-Bosheth, foully murdered this unfortunate man. When he was taking his midday rest, according to eastern custom, they made their way into his chamber, and stabbed him to death, and cut off his head, and carried it to David, expecting a great reward. They received the reward that David was wont to give to those who by wicked and murderous ways sought to ingratiate themselves into his favour by disloyalty to their master. They were promptly executed, and thus paid the just penalty for disloyalty and murder.[1] There was now no possible person left to succeed to the throne of Saul except David himself. The only one who lived was a crippled child, son of Jonathan, named Mephibosheth, and in those stormy times, and after all that had come and gone, and when the chosen people needed above all a chieftain who could rule and guide, David was left as the only one.

From first to last he had acted honourably. From first to last he had studied and followed the will of God. He had never been disloyal or treacherous or untrue. He had suffered much. He had borne his trials bravely; and now by the providence of God, and not by intrigue or craft, there was left but one who could guide the destinies of the nation—David, the King!

CHAPTER IX

DAVID THE KING—*continued*

By the death of Ish-Bosheth the throne of Israel was undoubtedly vacant, and in the minds of all men David was the only candidate for that throne. For years past, through his trials and difficulties, the most valiant men of Israel had been joining his standard; and now that no rivalry was possible, and that Saul and his house were gone, there was joy through the land, from the hope of peace and reunion under a strong man.

David's real and formal reign began at Hebron. Formally speaking, his reign at Hebron covered seven and a half years. Hebron was a sacred city of the tribe of Judah; it was the place where the patriarchs lay in their last rest,[1] and it was included in the territory assigned to Caleb.[2] It was here that a regular "covenant" was made between the people and their king;[3] it was here that troops of the strongest of the armed men of the nation marched down in their hundreds and thousands to greet their king.[4] They came from distant parts of the country, especially from the far north and even from beyond the Jordan. There were even some, although of course fewer in number, from Ephraim and Benjamin. Ephraim had had a traditional jealousy of Judah, and

Benjamin was Saul's own tribe, and some of them naturally enough adhered to the remnant of Saul's following at Mahanaim. The gathering at Hebron, however, was a splendid gathering. The flower of the nation had come together, not for purposes of war, but to hail and welcome the one man who by courage and honourable conduct and loyalty, and never "fighting for his own hand," had shown himself to be, or rather had been shown by God to be, the "Lord's anointed." It was a time of national enthusiasm, and showed a sense of national unity. David was now solemnly and publicly anointed by the "Elders of Israel" as the king.[1]

After what we may call the coronation feast at Hebron, men amongst the chosen people, and others outside, must have naturally looked to see what would be the first act of the new reign. The king was not slow to let them know. Jerusalem was the natural capital of the kingdom. It was "the inheritance," "the abode of peace." It is true that immediately after the death of Joshua the town itself had been taken;[2] but in it, and towering above it, there was a fastness or fortress of the Jebusites which had so far proved itself impregnable. It stood on a rocky height on Mount Zion; it was guarded by deep gullies or ravines, and hitherto it had withstood the arms of Israel. Notwithstanding this, the Lord had chosen it as the sacred city of His people. David, both from his keen statesmanship and that deep religious sense which ruled his life, saw that at all

costs Mount Zion must be in the hands of the chosen people. So confident were the Jebusites of the unassailable strength of their fortress, that when David threw his whole forces against it, they jeered at him, and said that even the blind and the lame could defend it.[1] For the taking of it, David offered the highest prize in his kingdom. He gave his royal word that whoever first scaled the tremendous cliff and walls should be commander-in-chief.[2] His nephew, Joab, the unscrupulous and the daring, with all the agility of his race, did the deed, and flung the enemy down, and led the way, and the place was carried.[2] The inhabitants that remained there seem to have been treated with leniency, and one of their powerful chiefs—perhaps their king—with his four sons, were allowed to remain on property that they had held outside the city.[3] The city and fortress itself, however, became the "City of David," and henceforth was the residence of the king. Walls were built and fortifications were added, as time went on. As time went on, also, David built his palace there, and Hiram, the king of Tyre, sent an embassy to congratulate him on what he had done, and assisted him by materials in the building that he undertook.[4]

The taking of Jerusalem was the first really great event of his reign. It had far-reaching consequences. Henceforth the city was to be the rallying-point of the race, and the symbol on earth of the rallying-point of David's true children—God's people—"the New Jerusalem" beyond the stars. Immediately on

the occupation of Mount Zion the Philistines—the old enemies of Israel—saw that the results of their victory at Gilboa were in jeopardy, and they acted at once. The valley of Rephaim lies at the other side of a mountain ridge, which separated the districts of Jerusalem from the country about Ben-Hinnom. To this valley the enemy penetrated without opposition. David inquired of the Lord according to his custom, and was divinely directed to attack the enemy. They were completely defeated. They had brought their idols to the field of battle, perhaps in imitation of the way in which Israel had formerly brought the Ark of the Covenant; these were taken, and by the command of David were burned.[1]

The Philistines although thrown back were not yet conquered. They advanced again as far as Rephaim. David again sought divine guidance, and following God's teaching drove the enemy back.[2] His complete victory over the Philistines, however, was only marked by the taking of Gath. This city was the headquarters and capital of the first of the five lordships of the Philistine Oligarchy. It had been the home of the giant whom David had conquered in his boyish days. It had been the place of a part of David's own exile, its name must have been a watchword of Philistine power, and to beat the enemy there was to hold the key to the enemy's country.[3] It has been thought, and it is probable, that it was in the course of the battles around Gath and its neighbourhood that there were various striking single combats, which the sacred

chroniclers record.[1] In the course of these the king himself was placed in great personal danger, but his nephew Abishai came to his assistance and slew a Philistine giant who had all but killed David. So narrow was the king's escape, that his people urged upon him the necessity of not again exposing his own person to such danger. "Thou shalt go no more," they said, "out with us to battle, that thou quench not the light of Israel."[2] This crushing of the Philistines was remarkable for two things: (1) that in these encounters, Jonathan, David's young nephew, followed the footsteps of his uncle, and behaved with similar courage in his encounter with a Philistine giant;[3] (2) that it made more and more evident to the nation that David was indeed their king, and that his life was of the highest value.[4]

It is difficult to follow the exact chronology of the history, but after this it appears probable that he had a successful and sanguinary war with Moab. It is said that the "king of Moab broke the trust which David had reposed in him, and put to death the aged parents confided to his charge." If this were so it may account for the extreme severity with which Moab was dealt with. A large number were slaughtered; their treasures were taken, and the rest were reduced to slavery.[5]

The greatest war, however, was David's Syrian war. The old king of Ammon had been hostile to Saul but friendly to David. David had sent messengers of friendliness and condolence on the death of Nahash,

his successor. The embassy was treated with insult, and war began.[1] It ranged over the country east of the Jordan as far as the Euphrates. In the beginning of the war the forces of Israel under the command of Joab simply went to the relief of a town of the tribe of Reuben, named Medeba.[2] The war, however, took a wider range. David himself took the field against all the tribes beyond the Jordan, of the races opposed to Israel. Their armies he routed completely at the battle of Helam, and followed this up by a second victory by which Damascus itself was reduced.[3] It has been said that the importance of this campaign can best be realised by the fact that it is the one campaign of David that left its mark on the record of heathen nations. The empire of Israel now extended to the Euphrates. At least one external sovereign, the king of Hamath, sought for an alliance with the conqueror. The famous Syrian horses were destroyed, but there was a procession of chariots to Jerusalem, and in after days the ornaments of the temple reminded the people of the victorious campaign, by the Euphrates, of their great king.[4] Again there came the war with Edom. Abishai at first was the general, and afterwards his brother Joab. There was a battle in the deep ravine, which it is said commanded Petra, and then the rocky fortress itself was stormed. The success was complete. Joab succeeded, and followed up his battles by exterminating the enemy. David himself at the close of the campaign came and settled the conquered country. These wars were closed

by the siege of Rabbah.[1] Rabbah was the stronghold of the Ammonites. There was a lower town and a citadel above it. In the lower town was the palace of the kings, in the upper the temple of Moloch. For a year the city held out against the whole forces of Israel. At last the lower town was taken, and Joab sent messages to David, "I have fought against Rabbah, and taken the city of waters." He loyally invited the king to come and complete the siege, "Lest Joab take the city, and it be called after his name." The king came and shortly after entered the upper city in triumph.[2] This was the close of David's great wars. Just at this time a son was born to him and his name was called Solomon, as the one who was to express universal peace. The fiercest conflicts of David's life were over; some of them are marked by a savagery which could not be condoned in the full light of Christian revelation.[3] We have to remember, however, that David was constantly fighting against nations sunk in the deepest corruption, and whose very religion was a religion of vileness and cruelty that had to be destroyed. He was never "fighting for his own hand," but always for the cause of God and the one people who held up the torch of truth; and in his vigour, and deep religious sense, amidst whatever faults, he endeavoured to set before him the welfare of his people, and the cause of God. He was in every sense *David, the King!*

CHAPTER X

DAVID THE ADMINISTRATOR

We have now to go back in point of time. After the taking of Jerusalem, David's first thought was the restoration of the Ark of the Lord. Some seventy years had passed since it had stood in the tabernacle, and now it was time that it should be placed in the capital of the land. We learn from Psalm cxxxii. that this had been the subject of anxious thought to the king, and it cost him sleepless nights. It would necessarily be a great occasion when the Ark was solemnly removed. It was meant indeed to be an outward sign of the renewal of the covenant with God, and the return of the people to their allegiance to Jehovah. An assembly was called from every part of the country north and south. The king himself went at the head of the army, and the Ark was brought from the house of Abinadab on a wooded hill above the city Kirjath-Jearim,[1] which received its name ("the city of the woods") from the woods which surrounded it.[2] The Ark was taken down the hill just as it had been brought by the Philistines, in a cart drawn by oxen. This was not according to the directions given by God in the book of Numbers. It was there commanded that it was not to be placed on a cart, but was to be borne on the shoulders of the Levites, and

that none but the appointed Levites were even to touch it.[1]

Towards the bottom of the hill the oxen stumbled, and Uzzah, who was leading them, put out his hand to steady the Ark and touched it. He instantly fell down dead, and David was filled with so much awe and horror that he did not dare to go farther. The Ark was carried aside to the house of Obed-Edom, who was a Levite of Gath-Rimmon, and of the family of the Korahites who had been appointed as custodians of the Ark.[2]

Three months elapsed before David attempted to move the Ark again. He was impressed, and so were the people, with the danger of irreverence in the things of God, and of dealing lightly, even when the motive was not a bad one, with God's express command. Every care was now taken to carry out to the letter all that had been ordered with regard to the removal of the Ark. It was done in a splendid manner, and with stately music, and with the proper ordering of the priests and the Levites. The king himself was dressed in a linen ephod, and with a harp in his hands, and with singing and with sacred dancing he led the procession. As they drew near Mount Zion the women of the city came out to welcome them. Trumpets pealed, there were shouts as of a victorious army, and now all felt that the wanderings of the Ark had ended even as the wanderings of the king had on this day of triumph.[3] There was only one discordant note in the general rejoicing.

Michal, the king's wife and the daughter of Saul, perhaps with the contempt of religion which had marked her father, perhaps with a proud, worldly feeling, which made her love and admire David as a youth and a warrior, but not as a religious man, as she watched the ceremony and saw the enthusiasm of the king, "despised" him in her heart for his devotion to God's service, which she, too, like her father, thought unworthy of kingly dignity. When he came after the sacred ceremonies were finished to bless his own household, her contempt broke out in violent and scornful words. David rebuked her with severity as seemed just, owing to her public scorn of religion, and that rebuke was ratified by God for "therefore Michal, the daughter of Saul, had no child unto the day of her death." [1]

This was indeed the great day of David's life. It had about it a very lofty meaning. It was the birthday of many of the Psalms. It reminded men of the glories of Israel from the earliest times; it made men feel that, "The Lord of Hosts" was with them, after the dark period of misfortune and irreligion during the reign of Saul. Mount Zion was now the city of the great king, and in two of the Psalms at least, viz., the fifteenth and twenty-first, the king gives vent to his governing thought that religion was to take the first place, and that those who ministered in a kingdom which was to be essentially religious must have the high characteristics of honesty and thoroughness and truth. We have seen in a former chapter the chief wars

that the king was obliged to wage in these opening years of his reign, but, besides being a warrior and a conqueror, David had to reorganise the whole kingdom. Things had been left in miserable confusion, but now the kingdom became one which could take its rank with neighbouring kingdoms. It has been truly said that "David was an imperial conqueror, if not of the same magnitude, yet of the same kind, as Rameses or Sennacherib." [1] There was this great difference, which must always be remembered, that, under David, religion and the worship of God formed the central point of the action of the nation, and as that action took a wider range under the great king so religious thought extended and enlarged, pointing onward, as is seen in the Psalms and the writings of the prophets, to that wider kingdom of "Great David's greater Son."

It is to be noted that the royal house itself takes now a prominence never known before—"the house of David." The king himself had greater state; he had his separate chamber in the palace, and was approached with signs of the lowliest reverence by the great officers of state. His sons, the princes, were placed under the charge of appointed governors, and the king himself had extended powers in dealing with the laws and customs of the country.[2]

The military organisation which had come from Saul's time was also greatly extended by David. The army was divided into twelve divisions, and each division was on duty for a month.[3] As there had been before, so there now was, only in a more prominent

manner, a commander-in-chief. He had himself an armour-bearer, and ten attendants to carry his baggage.[1] He took command by right in the absence of the king, and, besides his house in Jerusalem, he had a property in the country.[2] There can be no doubt that this office gained in dignity and power and prestige from the determined and commanding and unscrupulous character of Joab, who had been appointed to it, as we have seen, as a reward for scaling the fortifications of Jerusalem. The army of Israel meant really all the men of the country who were capable of bearing arms, and they were summoned together only in case of war. They were almost entirely foot soldiers; but chariots were introduced, and the officers and princes rode on mules.

The king had himself a bodyguard. It was chiefly composed of those who had come from the Philistines, and had probably joined David during his residence at Gath.[3] This guard was commanded by Benaiah, a man of great distinction and enormous strength, who had performed many wonderful exploits, and who afterwards was of immense service to King Solomon.[4] Besides these there were "the six hundred"; this body of men—the regular standing army—had grown from the bands who had joined David in his many wanderings. They were still known by the title of the mighty men; these were divided into three large bands of two hundred each. There was further subdivisions into smaller bands, and there were appropriate officers for all. Many of these are mentioned

by name as having distinguished themselves. There was a commander of the whole force, and he was Abishai, David's nephew, and younger brother of Joab, the "commander-in-chief." [1]

Besides this, there was considerable civil organisation. There were the leaders of the twelve tribes; also the king's counsellors; a scribe or "secretary of state"; a "recorder" or "historian"; and a tax-collector.[2]

In more distinctly religious matters, there were, we know, two prophets—Gad and Nathan; two high-priests—Abiathar and Zadok. The king also seems to have organised prophets to have special care of the singing and the music connected with religion; of these we hear of Asaph and Heman—the latter a grandson of Samuel—and Jeduthun.[3] There was a regular organisation of the Levites to attend to the sanctuary, each appointed to his special post.[4]

The remarkable point on which we cannot dwell too much is the combination in David of the temper and action of Prophet, Priest and King. His supremacy in war, his administrative ability, his personal influence over the whole people, find their reason and ground in his response to the call of God, his trust in God, and his profoundly religious character. To the whole nation the establishment of the throne at Jerusalem in such a way and under such a man gave a new feeling of strength and power and of their position as the people of God; and so he became the great symbol of the future Messiah, as they became the great symbol of the kingdom of Christ.

CHAPTER XI

DAVID'S DARK DAYS

The early days of David had been marked by simplicity of character, youthful gallantry and courage, and a noble and generous heart. Then came the days of severe trial, the trial of his wanderings, of his persecution by Saul, of his separation from Jonathan whom he loved. These days were marked by the same noble charaeteristics; he had borne his troubles manfully, and had "set God always before him." Then came the height of his glory, and the completeness of his success. Prosperity is often more trying and more difficult to deal with than adversity. If the heart is lifted up, if pride and self-conceit take the place of humility and manly self-forgetfulness, the soul is likely to lose its hold upon God and its close communion with Him, and there is danger of temptation prevailing over high principle, danger of the "natural man" usurping the place of the "spiritual man," danger of a fall.

So it was with David. The height of his success and the splendour of his triumph may have thrown him off his guard. He was a strong man with a passionate nature, and through his passions he fell. One of his officers, a faithful servant, devoted to his master and in command of one of the thirty bands or

divisions of the army, was named Uriah. He was a Hittite, and had married Bathsheba, daughter of another of David's officers. She was a woman of extraordinary beauty, and we gather from the records of holy scripture that her husband felt towards her the most tender affection. In a moment of slackness and careless laziness, probably when his moral vigour was relaxed by self-indulgent ease and the intoxication of success, David allowed himself to be attracted in a wicked and unmanly way by the beauty of his faithful servant's wife. It was a true instance of St James's awful statement. He was "drawn away of his lust, and enticed"; and when lust had conceived it brought forth sin; and sin, when it was finished, brought forth death.[1] One deliberate sin has this terrible property about it, that, unless checked at once, by honest confession and return to God, it is sure to lead on to other sins. Such was the case with David. He tried to cover up the crime he had committed by various efforts to deceive Uriah, and make it impossible for the dark secret to be known. He sent for Uriah from the siege of Rabbah on the pretence of wishing for news from the war (of which war we have spoken in a former chapter), but the soldier's sturdy faithfulness to his master defeated all David's plans. At length sin was added to sin; the king sent orders to Joab to put Uriah in the forefront of the battle, and compass his death. Joab, he knew, was sufficiently unscrupulous to obey any command, however wicked, and the thing was done. By David's

order the brave soldier was practically murdered. His wife went through the regulated days of "mourning," and then David took her to be his wife. To outward appearance no great harm had come of it all. The soldier had been, so it was supposed, killed naturally in war. Bathsheba had fulfilled the ceremonial mourning, and to the eastern mind there was nothing unnatural in David taking her as his wife. David, we know, himself was at the taking of the city, as Joab had sent for him to give him the full credit of the capture. The punishment suffered by those who were taken was of the most ferocious character. It has been truly pointed out that it "savoured more of the ferocity of Joab than of the bearing of David." But then David's heart and conscience were not at one with God, but were injured by his terrible sin.[1]

A year had passed away since David's fall. He had returned to Jerusalem in triumph. The dead Uriah was probably forgotten. The child of guilt was born, and loved by David with a passionate tenderness. The dreadful story, however, was not, we may be quite certain, all forgotten by the king himself. However much the commission of the crimes of adultery and murder had injured or blinded his conscience —as wilful sin always does—still, "the man after God's own heart," the man who had shown through many temptations "an honest and good heart," the man who had loved and trusted God so faithfully, could not have rested quite at his ease under the terrible memory that he had allowed base passion to

conquer his better self. He had "given occasion to the enemy to blaspheme," [1] and he knew that he had been called and anointed to restore religion and to bring back God's people to God. He had been horrified by Joab's unscrupulous craft and cruelty, and yet he had made use of that craft and cruelty to further his own base ends. He had refused to slay Saul, his own unrelenting enemy, when his own life was in danger, and when he could have got rid of his persecutor with no fear of the disapproval of others, and yet *he* had tried to deceive his own brave and faithful soldier, and then sent him relentlessly to death in order to conceal his guilt and his wicked gratification of mere lust. He had belied all his own noble and generous nature, and been untrue to the God who had protected him, and whom he had loved so much. It was a tremendous fall, and no outward distractions could allow his conscience to be silent, and his heart to be other than tortured. The thirty-second psalm is the standing witness of the untold agonies of a soul, not altogether dead to right, yet covering up its sin.

God was looking in mercy upon His servant, and Nathan was sent to him to bring him to the fulness of a sincere repentance, and to restore him to peace with God. Nathan did his duty fearlessly and completely. He introduced the subject by telling a simple story of wrong done parallel to the sin of the king. The wrath of the king's generous heart rose against the criminal, and he spoke his sentence, which,

however, was a sentence on himself. It was then that the prophet made the heart-piercing statement, "Thou art the man." David had been suffering from a sense of his wickedness, but now it was brought all before him in a vivid light. The prophet reminded him boldly and severely of what God had been to him and done for him; of what *he* had done to Uriah, and how he had acted towards Uriah's wife. God pardons sin on true repentance, but penance is often severe, even though sin is forgiven. Nathan warned him that his penance would be a severe one. He had used the sword of the children of Ammon to carry out his murderous intentions, and the sword would be felt by his own house—as it was in the murder of Amnon, in the slaughter of Absalom, in the execution of Adonijah. He had committed adultery, and terribly was he punished afterwards through the guilt of his own son. The punishment, the penance, would be severe, and part of it, a part that the father's loving heart felt most deeply, was to be the death of the child of Bathsheba.

The king had listened in absolute silence to the terrible message of the prophet. And now there was real sorrow. There was the sorrow of a manly repentance. He made no excuses. He softened off nothing. His confession was straight and prompt—"I have sinned." The awfulness of his sin rose before him; the heart of it, the root of it was plain. It was not merely the ungoverned desire and the impurity, it was that which lay beneath them all—the utter selfishness, the

self-gratification at all costs, the having "no pity." But there was even more than that, there was the deep, strong sense of his ingratitude to that God who had loved him so and done so much for him. The true heart came out. He was in bitter sorrow, in "godly repentance," because he had sinned against God.

If his confession was plain and straight and unvarnished, the absolution spoken by the prophet was also swift and complete—"The Lord hath also put away thy sin." David was restored to peace with God. The sunshine of God's countenance had come again upon him, but it was the sunshine that comes, as it has been said, amidst some clouds and storm, not on the quiet summer sky.[1] David—like the true penitent—trusted and loved God all the more, but he never could forget his own disloyalty to Him. The vi., xxxii., xxxviii. and li. Psalms bear witness to the anguish of his repentance. It is probably true, as it has been thought, that "in the chronological order of David's experience," they would stand as follows: Psalms xxxviii., vi., li. and xxxii. Certain it is, that for the Church at all times, and for sinners who are penitent, these Psalms have expressed most perfectly the true feeling of the soul. Though David's forgiveness was complete, yet his sin, as we have said, entailed temporal punishment. His immediate penance was terribly severe. With his warm fatherly heart, he loved Bathsheba's son with deep affection. The child, however, sickened to death. David felt deeply the sufferings of the little one. Without ceasing, he

fasted and prayed for it. He lay on the ground night and day, taking his share in the punishment, and pleading, if it might be, for its life, and refusing all the comforts and consolations offered him by his servants. When it was all over and the child was gone, with a high faith and deep submission which his servants could scarcely understand—for they could scarcely realise the depth and strength of his affectionate nature and his love of God—he then took off the garments of mourning, went into God's house to worship and then returned to his palace. His faith taught him that, though it had pleased God to take the child, he was not lost but gone before.

Whatever sorrows there are and must be to penitents who have deeply fallen, still "God is the God of comfort," and He comforted David. Bathsheba was now his wife. Another child was born to them and David—with the sense of restored peace with God—called him Solomon, "the peaceful."[1]

The other great troubles of David's reign were strangely and sadly connected with his great fall. His eldest son was Amnon the son of Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, who seems to have been a heartless and bad man. David had two children, Absalom and Tamar, children of Maacah, daughter of the king of Geshur, who had been married to David after his enthronement at Hebron. Tamar, like her brother Absalom, was of striking beauty, and her half-brother Amnon conceived a guilty passion for her, and when with gentleness and dignity she was ministering to him in his

pretended illness, he behaved towards her with cruelty and brutality and then with extreme heartlessness. The noble and heart-broken girl, when in the extremity of her despair and mourning, met her brother Absalom. According to eastern notions the avenging of the crime would be believed to be a duty in him, if not regularly punished. The divine law against the sin was plain; but in David, since his own great fall, there was a moral weakness, and though he was said to have been "very wroth," he left the sin entirely unpunished, perhaps from a special affection for his first-born. Two years passed but Absalom had not forgotten. The sight of the noble-hearted sister whom he loved kept constantly before him the rankling memory of the cruel insult that had been offered to her. Absalom did his best, however, to conceal his intention. The time of sheep shearing had come, which, as we have seen, was a time of festivity. Absalom invited the king and the court to be present at the feast. He knew well probably that the king would not go. David indeed declined on the ground that such a large number would make the festival an expensive one, but he blessed him. He then asked for his brother Amnon, the heir-presumptive. Possibly David may have suspected something, remembering the terrible story and hearing, in all probability, that Absalom never spoke to Amnon, so he answered him rather sharply, "Why should he go with thee?" Absalom, however, "pressed him," and threw him off his guard, by requesting that all the king's sons

might go, and they did. There was the feast and then there was merriment, and then at a sudden signal Amnon was murdered as Absalom had previously arranged with his servants.[1]

There was general alarm, and the princes fled to Jerusalem. The wildest tidings that all had been murdered preceded them. The king and his courtiers were filled with horror, but relief came as the fugitives reached the palace. Absalom knew that to have slain the heir-presumptive, and a brother so loved by his father, placed him in great danger, and he wisely fled at once to the court of his maternal grandfather. There he remained three years. The king had loved Amnon much, but in spite of his faults he loved Absalom more. This made it more easy for Joab to intercede on his behalf. Perhaps Joab was moved to this from his knowledge of the popular sympathy with Absalom. To the people he would appear in the light of a hero, who had avenged his sister's disgrace when his father seemed afraid or unwilling to punish it. He was also, as his father had been in his younger days, gifted with winning ways, and of extraordinary manly beauty. When he was allowed to return, first to his own country place and then to Jerusalem, he found himself practically the most dignified figure amongst the princes. Although David had not lost his love for him, *his* heart seems to have been alienated from his father by his three years' exile. David's sin, and the various acts of consequent weakness, had lost him something of his old

influence over the people, and Absalom took advantage of the state of things in order to win them to himself. He insinuated that things would be better if he were at the head of affairs. He put on considerable royal state; then he obtained permission to go to perform a vow at Hebron. For this purpose he managed to take with him some two hundred influential persons, and then he boldly set up the standard of revolt.[1]

Probably it was on the following morning David resolved on flight from Jerusalem. He was wise in doing so. He avoided thus being shut up in the city; he prevented the danger of battle or massacre in the streets; and he gave his followers time to rally round him. Indeed, on this occasion, David's old self came out with great distinctness—his patience, his genuine religion, his generosity, his shrewdness. It was a solemn march from Jerusalem towards the Jordan. It is all minutely described in the scripture, and various incidents by the way are mentioned. For instance, David, with his usual generosity, observing Ittai of Gath commanding the body-guard, urged him and his men to return, and not to wreck their fortunes by following a fallen king—a request which was as generously refused. Again on the mountain crest Hushai the Archite met him, and undertook to go back to frustrate the wise counsel of the shrewd Ahithophel, who was noted for his wisdom, and who had gone over to Absalom. This Hushai accordingly did, and his political sagacity contributed much to Absalom's final defeat. Then again, there was the

meeting with Ziba, the crafty slave of Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son, bringing offerings of food and a false story that his master had gone over to the rebels. Then on the downward slope of the hills the fierce Shimei, son of Gera, met him, although they were separated by a ravine. He was a member of the fallen dynasty of Saul, and hated David. He went along, cursing as he went, and throwing stones and dust towards the king. David's companions were furious, but the king was calm, and he reminded them how, since his beloved son had deserted him, anything could be borne, and that these curses, in a certain sense, might be looked upon as expressions of divine wrath for his sins. The procession reached the Jordan valley, and there received the news that the counsel of Hushai had prevailed over the counsel of Ahithophel. In the early morning the king and his followers passed across the Jordan and came to Mahanaim. The forces of Absalom also crossed the Jordan, and the battle was fought in the forest of Ephraim. David had desired to lead the army himself, but the people had urged upon him that the preservation of his life was the most important thing for them all. He therefore gave way, and remained at Mahanaim, and his men went into battle under the command of Joab and Abishai and Ittai.

The victory was on the side of David. Absalom had entered the battle riding on a mule, probably on the royal mule, and the creature going at a rapid pace, and meeting a detachment of David's army, had

dashed aside through the thick woods, and Absalom's head was caught in the boughs of the terebinth trees which interlace much with one another, and all the more entangled with them from the quantity of his splendid hair, and there he hung, probably half stunned, and suffocated, and helpless. The ordinary soldiers dare not touch the prince, but only reported it to Joab. Joab simply wounded the prince, and then left his armour-bearers to finish him. The hacked and bleeding body was thrown into a pit and covered with stones. Two messengers went back to Mahanaim to inform David. Ahimaaz was one who, reaching the king rapidly, announced the victory. Then David asked as to Absalom, but Ahimaaz could not, or would not, or dare not, answer him. Then came the Cushite messenger sent by Joab, and though he too feared to express Absalom's fate in so many words, he spoke of it in such a way that David could not doubt the fact. David turned away in almost speechless grief, and as he ascended the steps that led to the chamber over the gate, the crowds now gathering around could hear the wail of the heart-broken father: "My son Absalom! my son! my Absalom! Oh, would that I had died for thee! Absalom, my son, my son!" [1]

There had been a great victory, but there was little joy at Mahanaim that evening. They felt for the king's sorrow; they knew how he had begged for mercy to be shown towards his son, and how that entreaty had been disregarded. Joab had no such feel-

ings and no such sorrow ; he forced himself roughly into the presence of the king, and roughly he reproached him. It was the beginning of a lasting breach between them ; neither the one nor the other could forgive or forget what had passed that day. For the moment, however, there was danger impending, and the king found it necessary to yield to the rough counsel of the slayer of his son. He took his usual place, and received the people in his royal seat at the gate. The immediate trouble was over. Absalom's rebellion was quelled, but it had left dark and sad memories, and led on to further troubles. To David it left a lasting heartache, but, as it has been well said, "the memorial of his grief was the response which it awakened in the hearts of his subjects—the lament over the winning and beautiful creature whose charm outlived the shock even of ungrateful, ungenerous and unsuccessful rebellion." [1]

CHAPTER XII

DAVID'S LAST DAYS

David had won the battle, and the rebellion of Absalom was at an end. There were, however, other causes of dissension at work, and among these was the feeling still lingering amongst Saul's adherents, and in the tribe of Benjamin, that there might be a hope

of restoring the fallen family. When David returned across the Jordan, the men of his own tribe—the tribe of Judah—went to meet him to Gilgal, and to bring him back. There were others who had been opposed to David, who also went to meet him to make their peace. Shimei, taking with him a thousand men of his own tribe, Benjamin, met the king as he was about to embark, and asked his forgiveness. He put forward as a proof of his repentance the presence of so large a body of the men of Benjamin being the first in Israel to welcome the king. Both from generosity and from wise policy, David forgave his insolent enemy. Ziba, the hypocritical servant of Mephibosheth, also went to meet him. David must have had some lurking suspicion of the loyalty of the house of Saul when he, in a manner unworthy of him, and unworthy of his love to Jonathan, allowed this wicked servant "to divide the land," when as a matter of fact Jonathan's son had shown himself from first to last unshaken in his loyalty. The Talmud has a striking remark in connection with David's petulant and unworthy conduct towards Mephibosheth ; it says : "In the hour when David said to Mephibosheth, Thou and Ziba shall divide the land, a voice of God came forth and said to him, Rehoboam and Jeroboam shall divide the kingdom." [1] There came also to meet David, Barzillai, a grand old chieftain, who had stood by David in his hours of trouble, and now, although weighted with years, desired to meet the king and join in escorting him to Jerusalem. He asked for

nothing for himself, but was content to allow his son, Chimham, to attend the king, whilst he, at David's suggestion, turned back again to his own city—the distant Rogelim—there to die, and there to be laid to his rest, having seen with religious joy the victory and return of "the Lord's anointed." There had always been a feeling of feud between the northern tribes, especially Ephraim and Judah. The men of Judah were proud of being the Royal tribe, and they made it felt. The other tribes were jealous of Judah, and at the forward part they took in the return of the king. Hot words passed between them, and the men of Judah seem to have been insolent and violent. It needed a very slight thing to cause an open rupture. The spark was thrown upon the gunpowder, so to speak, by the action of a man named Sheba, an insignificant person, of the tribe of Benjamin. This leader of discontent took upon himself to blow a trumpet, and declare to those who were present among the other tribes that as David cared so for Judah, and Judah for David, they had better leave the king to reign over his own tribe, and they would take care of themselves. David accordingly returned to Jerusalem, accompanied only by the tribe of Judah.[1]

His first care, of course, was to suppress the revolt of Sheba. The danger was that Sheba might occupy the fortified towns, and this had at all costs to be prevented. At the moment of his indignation with Joab, after the death of Absalom, he had appointed

Amasa as commander-in-chief. To him he entrusted the command of the expedition against Sheba, but Amasa found himself unable to get together an adequate force. Time was pressing, and the king found himself obliged to fall back upon Abishai, Joab's brother, which, in fact, was falling back upon Joab, although it appears probable that in the strained relations between them he preferred to deal with him through his brother.

Joab as commander-in-chief had no difficulty in raising an army. In his unimpeded march up the country he came upon Amasa, and allowing all his anger and jealousy to have free play, foully and treacherously murdered him. This murder, brought home to Joab by the bloodstains of the unfortunate young man left upon his girdle and sandals, was never forgotten by the king and the army. Now, however, every nerve was strained to pursue the rebels. Sheba was followed to the fortress of Abel-Beth-Maacah in the north-western extremity of the country. This fortress Joab determined to destroy. Such a terrible fate was averted by a wise woman of the place. She spoke to Joab from the walls of the city, and implied that the city itself had no complicity with the rebellion, and proposed that, in proof of what she said, Sheba should be killed and his head thrown over the wall. This was accordingly done. Joab saw by the bloody head thrown over at his feet that the rebellion had ended, and he and his army retired to Jerusalem, and thus closed the last political difficulty of David's reign.[1]

We are told in the second book of Samuel as well as in the first book of the Chronicles of some other events which it is difficult to place in chronological order. There was, for instance, a famine which desolated the country for three years. This may have been in the earlier days of his reign. It seems to have been a divine judgment for the cruelty of the house of Saul towards the Gibeonites. The Gibeonites demanded, according to the law, the avenging of blood, and David was obliged to grant it. Seven of Saul's descendants were handed over to them, were put to death, and then nailed to crosses. These lifeless bodies hung there from the early barley harvest in April, until the early rains of autumn, whilst the removal of famine evidenced that blood-guiltiness had been atoned for. This drew out one of the most pathetic expressions of womanly tenderness told us in the simple language of scripture. Rizpah had been a concubine of Saul. Two of her sons and five of the sons of Saul's eldest daughter, Merab, were the victims handed over to the vengeance of the Gibeonites. The curse was removed from the land by this terrible expiation. But Rizpah thought not of anything but of her love for her slaughtered boys and their kinsmen. She exhibited a high instance of womanly devotion—one of those instances which can never be forgotten in the history of humanity. During all those dreary months she took her station by night and by day close to the crosses on which the dead were hung. They might be shrivelled and dried in the fierce eastern sun, but no

jackal and no vulture should touch them as long as this devoted woman could keep her watch.

The news of Rizpah's faithfulness and devotion came to the ears of the king, and the king took action at once. "David," we are told, "himself went and took the bones of Saul, and the bones of Jonathan his son, from the men of Jabesh-Gilead, who had stolen them from the walls of Beth-Shan, where the Philistines had hanged them, when the Philistines had slain Saul in Gilboa; and he brought up from thence the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son, and they gathered the bones of them that were hanged (on the crosses). And the bones of Saul and of Jonathan his son buried they in the country of Benjamin in Zelah, in a sepulchre of Kish his father."[1]

There is another event which perhaps took place in the later years of the reign. David seems to have allowed himself to act upon merely military or political motives, and, instead of trusting in God, ordered a general census of the people, as though depending entirely upon his military might. The state of mind in the king which led to this is represented in scripture as being really a judgment upon Israel, probably for the rebellions of Absalom and Sheba. Satan, we are expressly told, stood up to accuse Israel, and was allowed to influence David. Even Joab and the other commanders hesitated, but David was obdurate. The military census was taken, or in great part taken. Then David's conscience awoke. He spent a night in confession and prayer. The sin was forgiven, but

Gad the prophet was sent to announce to him the temporal punishment. He was allowed to choose between famine, and defeat by his enemies, and pestilence. He chose to fall unreservedly into the hands of God. He chose the pestilence. It was indeed a terrible pestilence, but David's humiliation and faith were not unrepaid. He "and the elders clothed in sackcloth" lay on their faces in repentance and humiliation before the Lord. God's mercy was extended to him. The pestilence was shortened from three days to one. The arm of the angel of death was stayed, and David and those with him were permitted to see the angel. His arm was stretched out towards Jerusalem, just over Mount Moriah, where was the threshing-floor of Araunah or Ornan the Jebusite. This was the spot where, centuries before, Abraham had been about to offer Isaac. It was at this time just outside the city. It was the place where the altar of the burnt-offering was to stand in the future. When David saw the angel he lifted up his voice in confession, and begged that as he had sinned, he, and not his people, should be punished. God heard the confession and directed that David should purchase the place from Araunah and consecrate it to the Lord. Araunah with his four sons were engaged at the moment on their threshing-floor. They too had seen the vision of the angel. They crept out awe-struck and did obeisance to the king. David asked to buy the threshing-floor. Araunah generously begged to give it, but the king would not

offer to God what cost him nothing. It was bought; the pestilence was stayed; the altar was erected. The hill received the name of Moriah, *i.e.* "the vision of Jehovah." There, in a few years, was the altar of the temple; and probably the very stone on which Isaac had been offered became the centre of the sacrificial religion of the Jews, and now remains in the mosque of Omar—under "the dome of the rock." [1]

The era of war which had been the reign of David was nearing its close, and the era of peace marked by the reign of Solomon was about to begin. There was some trouble and anxiety in the closing days of the great king arising from the effort of Adonijah to acquire for himself the throne instead of Solomon. Even in his last weakness, David rose to the occasion and Solomon's throne was secured. Then came the king's last directions and his last words. They were still prophetic of that King and that kingdom of which he himself and his people were a type. Then followed his last words in the form of a stately psalm. It was a grand prophecy and it was a triumphant rejoicing of his soul as it passed to God. He died at about the age of seventy, after a life of strange vicissitudes. It is said that the general feeling was against burial of the dead within the habitations of men. This feeling was put aside in the case of the great king and he was "buried in the city of David," the city which by his valour had become the capital of his kingdom. His tomb was pointed out for many and many a year after by those who were proud of their race. "His sepulchre

is with us unto this day" is the saying of St Peter in his pentecostal sermon, and somewhere in the caverns beneath the hill and the ruins of the ancient city, lie, undiscovered, the bones of the shepherd-king—"the man after God's own heart"—waiting for the resurrection.[1]

CHAPTER XIII

DAVID AS PSALMIST

It has been said that the poetry of Israel is almost entirely of two kinds, lyrical and didactic. Epic and dramatic poetry they have practically none. The book of Job is indeed a drama, and the Canticles is a book which has been so designated also, but these are not dramas in the sense of the great dramatic poems of the Greeks. The beautiful lament of David for Saul and for Jonathan is a lyric poem of a very high order. But their poetry is almost entirely religious, and composed for the public services of the worship of God. Lyrical poetry of a religious character was early known to the Hebrews, and it is probable that they learnt much in this direction in Egypt. There are remnants throughout the earlier scriptures of poetry of this kind. There is an allusion made to what is supposed to have been a collection of ballads, called the "Book of the Wars of the Lord," in the

book of Numbers,[1] and another as to the digging of a well in the wilderness, for water was, as it is still, in the east, a very precious thing.[2] There are various other chants and poems preserved in the early records of the nation, but the finest and longest is the ninetieth psalm, which was really composed by Moses. During the time of the Judges there was a very martial and national spirit awakened, which, as always, must have given an impulse to poetry. One of the finest lyrical poems that we know belongs to that time, and is the song of Deborah.[3]

David, however, may be called the real father of fine lyrical poetry among the people of Israel. He was a born poet and a skilled musician. Music and poetry were the great delight of his deeply religious character, and in sorrow or in joy, in flight from the fury of Saul and the rebellion of his own son Absalom, as well as in moments of happiness and triumph, his harp was his constant companion. His whole life and character can be read in his poems. Not that David wrote in any way with this purpose; his psalms were divinely inspired as a revelation of God's dealings with His people and a comfort to all religious minds of all ages, expressive both of their joy and their sorrow.

There are of course many psalms included in the collection ever used by the Jewish and then by the Catholic Church which were not written by David. Some were written by Hezekiah. He had instituted a great reform, and done much to restore the worship

of the temple and to arrange as to the music in public worship.[1] Jehoshaphat had done the same.[2] He had instituted throughout the country, public teachers. Hezekiah had encouraged a society of learned men to collect and preserve "all the scattered remains of the earlier literature." To the "pious labours" of these two kings it has been believed that we owe the preservation of many psalms which otherwise would have been lost to us. The psalms of David and of Asaph were again sung in the temple service. It is doubtful whether or not we have any psalms of the time of Jehoshaphat. We certainly have some of the reign of Hezekiah. Some come from the Korahite singers. Some appear to have been written soon after the defeat of Sennacherib and the destruction of his army. Some of the prophets were also themselves psalmists. "Jonah (chap. ii.), Isaiah (chap. xii.), Habakkuk (chap. iii.), were all lyric poets." Two psalms are supposed to have been written by Jeremiah. There were certainly some psalms written during the Captivity. During that captivity, "the psalms of David and his singers" had been a comfort to the exiles. On the return, the joy of return was expressed in psalms and hymns. There is a series of psalms, in which "the triumphant Hallelujah, a nation's great thanksgiving," forms the opening or the close. Of these, Psalms cxiii. to cxviii., called the "Hallel," is interesting to us Christians, as it formed "the hymn" mentioned in St Matthew and St Mark,[3] in that "choral celebration" at the first institution of

the Holy Eucharist, sung by our Lord and His apostles. Possibly also there were some psalms composed in the time of the Maccabees which are now in our version. Still it is interesting to remember, in connection with our subject, the following statement of a careful and learned student of the Psalter:—"Still, during the five hundred years which elapsed from the death of David to the time of Ezra, a period as long as from the days of Chaucer to our own, no great successors to David appeared; no era but that of Hezekiah . . . was famous for its sacred singers. Here and there a true Israelite, in his own distress or oppressed by the sins and calamities of his nation, poured out his complaint before God; or for his own people's deliverance sang aloud his song of thanksgiving. And some few of these songs and complaints may have been collected and added to the earlier psalms." . . . But . . . it "remains true, that the psalms belong, as a whole, not to many, but chiefly to two or three periods of Jewish history—to the age of David, to that of Hezekiah, to the return of Babylonish captivity." [1]

It would be impossible and inappropriate here to discuss the innumerable and constantly contradictory views of "critics" as to the exact psalms which are to be allotted to David. "Criticism" of one sort or another has been of invaluable service in illustrating the history and meaning of this, as well as of other parts of scripture. "Criticism," especially in modern times, has also run riot in these sacred subjects. It is enough for us to take such teaching and help

as can be given by devout and learned men, who follow the traditions of the only sure guide—the Church of Christ. In connection with the subject before us now, we know enough to be quite certain of a certain number of psalms as being psalms of David, and in those psalms we can read the character of the poet king, as well as learn spiritual lessons through him from God. No one but the wildest "critic" can doubt that the iii. Psalm for instance, with its courage and its trust, came from him on his flight from Absalom. The v., the vii., the xv., the xvi., the xvii., the xxxii., the li., the lxiii., for instance, as well as the cx. (certified to by our Lord Himself), all come from David himself. Here we have love, and tenderness, and depth, and devotion, and chivalrous generosity, and penitence, and courage, to say nothing of the prophetic and Messianic spirit which, by God's guidance, breathes through his psalms.

David in fact may be called the founder of the national and religious poetry of his people. He not only appointed the three men, Asaph, Heman and Ethan (or Jeduth),[1] as his chief musicians, who were themselves poets and contributors to the Psalter, but, besides being himself the chief contributor, besides exhibiting in great measure his own character and history and inner life in his psalms, he may be said to have given the tone and bent to what has proved to be in fact the most remarkable collection of religious poetry in the world.

It has been pointed out that there are other

religious poems of enormous antiquity and of the highest interest. The chief of these are the Hymns of the Vedas, and these are of such antiquity that nothing or next to nothing is known of their authors. All that can be known regarding these hymns is what learned scholars have gathered from the language and contents of the hymns themselves. That language "is the oldest form of that which is often spoken of as the oldest of languages, the sacred language of the Brahmans, the Sanscrit." [1] These hymns are themselves the most ancient relics of the early religions of India. We are also told that "the common and prominent element in these hymns is their sense of the greatness and wonder and mystery of external nature." [2] Whoever wrote these ancient poems seem to have been earnest and fervent worshippers, and to have had an intense sense of a living power and presence behind the wonderful spectacle of the actual world which lies before us all. They were dazed and amazed by this changeful spectacle, and in a dim and yet eager way they, as it has been said, "looked with unsteady and wavering vision; they saw, and they saw not; . . . they seem like men striving after a great truth apparently within their reach, but really just beyond it." [3] The great difference between those who wrote these wonderful hymns, and David and the poets of Israel is, that the latter held to the great central truth of religion, the one living God, the eternal, the everlasting, between whom and mankind there is a real relation; whilst the

former, although they picked up grains of truth, yet in the main truth, "missed their way."[1] It has been truly said, "The religion of the Vedas could not save itself or India; whatever may have been its beginnings, it led by irresistible steps to what Bunsen calls the 'great tragedy of India and humanity,' and to the 'tragic catastrophe' which saw in annihilation the only refuge, the single hope of man; which raised the great Oriental faculty of resignation to the power of absolute, universal, passionless despair."[2] The Vedas are awful and interesting relics of a distant effort towards a religion—a religion of awe and wonder.

Other ancient poems are to be found in the Zend-avesta, the ancient religious book of those who were taught by Zoroaster, the prophet of Persia. These have a higher moral tone, bring out more strongly the sense of the difference between right and wrong. Zoroaster, however, took hold of the fatal notion of "two eternal and co-ordinate principles."[3] He taught, in fact, that there were twin gods, the one the god of goodness, the other the god of evil. This fatal notion led afterwards to portentous and obstinate mischiefs.

The other great collection of religious poems, in part not so old as the Zend and Vedic Hymns, is the collection of the Psalms, which we owe in such large measure to the genius and religious earnestness of David. The contrast between them and the other hymns which we have been considering, brings before us their special value. It is well to notice

one or two of the special characteristics of the psalms as contrasted with these other religious poems of which we are reminded by great teachers: (1) Whereas these latter have no living power amongst men now, the psalms are as alive to-day and as powerful in their influence over minds and human souls as when they were first written. (2) While the psalms express the same tremendous sense of the greatness and awfulness of the unseen Power, they express something more. They bring out God in His character not only of a powerful Creator, but as a holy King whose lofty sovereignty is carrying on, with high moral purpose, with unclouded righteousness as well as with boundless power, the government of His own world. They put Him forward as a Father who "pitieth His own children," as well as a Ruler who will not allow iniquity to go unpunished. (3) They take a wide view also of human nature, and see deep into the intricacies of the human heart. They express every mood of joy and sorrow, of thanksgiving and despondency. They are for all time and for "all sorts and conditions of men." They look boldly into the future. They are confident of the final triumph of goodness. They are confident of the greatness of the greatest of all causes—the cause of a righteous and faithful God. (4) Above all, perhaps, the psalms bring out in a way never dreamt of before the close, the intimate relation between man and his Maker, the possibility of the peace which passeth all understanding, the possibility of forgiveness to true repentance,

the possibility of an even passionate affection of the soul for God.

To every religious mind the book of Psalms is a treasure-house of teaching and devotion and comfort. We Christians know well that God's spirit speaks through it to our own souls, and that by God's guidance it has been always, and always will be, the central book of devotion for the Church; but we cannot put aside a sense of admiration and gratitude to him to whom under God we owe such an invaluable treasure—to David, the shepherd lad, the hero, the penitent, the king—the sweet singer of Israel.

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QUESTIONS

Chapter I. **Bethlehem and Judah.**

1. *State a few of the natural features of Bethlehem.*
2. *In what way was it associated with David's ancestors?*
3. *What were the characteristics of the tribe of Judah?*
4. *Who were Zeruiah, Abigail, Caleb, Achsah?*

Chapter II. **The Call and Anointing of David.**

1. *What was Samuel's ostensible object in visiting Bethlehem at this time?*
2. *What part did the "Schools of the Prophets" play in the economy of Israel, and what were Samuel's duties?*
3. *Describe David's spiritual and moral discipline while acting as a shepherd.*
4. *Who were Eliab, Saul, Jesse?*

Chapter III. **David and Goliath.**

1. *Who were the Philistines, and in what sense do we use the name to-day?*
2. *Where was the scene of war?*
3. *Who were Deborah, Barak?*

Chapter IV. **David and Saul.**

1. *State the effect of his victory over Goliath on David's fortunes.*
2. *What was the incident that aroused Saul's jealousy?*

3. *What was the origin of the saying, "Is Saul also among the prophets"?*
4. *Who were Merab, Michal, Abner?*

Chapter V. **David and Jonathan.**

1. *What heroic action did Jonathan perform along with his armour-bearer? Name the Philistine outpost where it occurred.*
2. *What rash vow did Saul pledge the people to observe, how and why did Jonathan break it, and by whom was he saved?*
3. *What was the Urim and Thummim?*
4. *Where were the following places:—Michmash, Seneh, Gibeah, Bethaven?*

Chapters VI. and VII. **David's Wanderings.**

1. *How did David supply his needs and those of his followers, and why was it illegal?*
2. *Where did David place his father and mother for safety?*
3. *Who were Ahimelech, Abiathar, Doeg the Edomite, Gad?*
4. *Where did the last meeting between David and Jonathan take place?*
5. *Give the two instances when Saul's life was at David's mercy.*
6. *What caused David's anger against Nabal, and how was it appeased?*
7. *What happened when David and his men went to Aphek with Achish? and state how David avenged himself on the Amalekites. Who were Abigail, Phalti, Abishai; and where were Nob, Gath, Adullam, Keilah, Wilderness of Ziph, Ziklag?*

Chapters VIII. and IX. **David the King.**

1. *How did the Philistines treat the bodies of Saul and his sons?*
2. *Had David any rival from the house of Saul? by whom was he put forward?*
3. *What great crime was Joab guilty of at this time?*
4. *What was Joab's relation to David, and why did the latter not punish Joab's crime?*
5. *What was the first military success of David's reign, and what important position did its achievement decide?*
6. *Name the great wars of David's reign. Who were Hiram, Nahash, Asahel, and where were situated Hebron, Mount Zion, Tyre, Rephaim, Moab, Damascus?*

Chapters X. and XI. **David's Administration and Dark Days.**

1. *State David's military and civil organisations.*
2. *Sketch his provision for the services of the Sanctuary, and name the seers who flourished in Jerusalem during his time.*
3. *Sketch the life of Absalom and the course of his rebellion.*
4. *How was Hushai of signal service to David?*
5. *Who were Benaiah, Zadok, Asaph, Adonijah, Tamar, Ittai of Gath, Hushai the Archite, Zeba, Shimei?*

Chapter XII. **David's Last Days.**

1. *How did the revolt of Sheba take rise, and how was it crushed?*
2. *What second crime was Joab guilty of at this time?*
3. *Why were the remaining descendants of Saul nearly all exterminated?*
4. *What led to the occurrence of the great pestilence in Jerusalem during David's last days? How was it stayed?*

5. *Who was Solomon's mother?*
6. *Who were Barzillai, Sheba, Araunah?*

Chapter XIII. **David as Psalmist.**

1. *What is the prevailing characteristic in Hebrew poetry, and what branch did David excel in?*
2. *Note the reforms in worship introduced by David.*
3. *Were all the Psalms David's? State some that are undoubtedly his, and some that cannot be by him.*
4. *Name some other ancient religious poems belonging to other lands.*

SPECIAL.

Write short essays of not more than 600 words on Joab, Jonathan, Saul, Michal.

NOTES

Page 1, *Note* 1. Ruth ii. 1 ; 1 Sam. xx. 6.
,, 1, ,, 2. 1 Chron. ii. 24, 50, 51.
,, 2, ,, 1. Gen. xlviii. 7.
,, 2, ,, 2. Ruth i. 19, ii. 3.
,, 3, ,, 1. 1 Sam. xvii. 34-37.
,, 3, ,, 2. 2 Sam. xxiii. 14-16 ; 1 Chron. ii. 15-19.
,, 3, ,, 3. 2 Sam. xix. 37, 38 ; Jer. xli. 17.
,, 3, ,, 4. See Stanley, *Jewish Church*, Pt. ii. p. 46.
,, 4, ,, 1. ,, ,, Lect. xxii.
,, 4, ,, 2. 1 Chron. xxvii. 18.
,, 5, ,, 1. Numb. xiii. 1, 6, xiv. 6-10, xxvi. 65 ; Deut. i. 36.
,, 5, ,, 2. Josh. xxi. 11, 12, xv. 13-19.
,, 6, ,, 1. Gen. xlix. 11.
,, 6, ,, 2. Gen. xlix. 9.
,, 6, ,, 3. Josh. xv. 14.
,, 6, ,, 4. Josh. xv. 16, 17.
,, 6, ,, 5. Josh. xv. 18, 19.
,, 7, ,, 1. See R. W. Church, *Human Life, &c.*, Sermon vii.
,, 8, ,, 1. 1 Sam. xv. 23.
,, 8, ,, 2. 1 Sam. xvi. 2.
,, 8, ,, 3. 1 Sam. xx. 6, 39, xvi. 4.
,, 8, ,, 4. 1 Sam. xv. 4, 5.
,, 9, ,, 1. Comp. 1 Sam. xvi. 2, 13.

Page 9, *Note* 2. Edersheim, *Bible History*, vol. iv. chap. x., comp. 1 Sam. xvi. 12, "ruddy" ="auburn-haired."
,, 10, ,, 1. Ps. xviii. 33, 34.
,, 10, ,, 2. Stanley, *Jewish Church*, Pt. 2, Lect. xxii.
,, 10, ,, 3. 1 Sam. xvi. 13.
,, 10, ,, 4. 1 Sam. x. 6, 10.
,, 12, ,, 1. Comp. Ps. viii. 3.
,, 12, ,, 2. Comp. *e.g.* Matt. xiv. 23; Mark vi. 46.
,, 12, ,, 3. Gal. i. 18, and comp. Lightfoot *in loc.*
,, 13, ,, 1. 1 Sam. xvii. 34-38.
,, 13, ,, 2. 1 Sam. x. 23, 24, 27; xi. 13.
,, 14, ,, 1. 1 Sam. xvi. 14.
,, 14, ,, 2. 1 Sam. xvi. 18.
,, 14, ,, 3. 1 Sam. xvi. 20.
,, 15, ,, 1. 1 Sam. xvi. 21.
,, 15, ,, 2. 1 Sam. xvii. 15.
,, 16, ,, 1. Edersheim, *Bible History*, vol. iv. chap. x.
,, 17, ,, 1. Josh. xi. 21, 22.
,, 20, ,, 1. Mark v. 36.
,, 22, ,, 1. 1 Sam. xvii.
,, 22, ,, 2. Edersheim, *Bible History*, vol. iv. chap. 10.
,, 23, ,, 1. 1 Sam. xviii. 8, 9.
,, 23, ,, 2. 1 Sam. xviii. 2, 5, 13.
,, 23, ,, 3. 1 Sam. xviii. 11, 12, 17.
,, 24, ,, 1. 1 Sam. xviii. 15, 17, 29.
,, 25, ,, 1. 1 Sam. xix. 1-7.
,, 26, ,, 1. 1 Sam. xix. 13, 16; comp. Gen. xxxi. 19.
,, 27, ,, 1. 1 Sam. xix. 19-24.
,, 27, ,, 2. 1 Sam. x. 10-12.
,, 29, ,, 1. 1 Sam. xiv. 7.
,, 29, ,, 2. 1 Sam. xiv. 13.

Page 30, *Note* 1. 1 Sam. xiv. 21.
,, 32, ,, 1. Edersheim, *Bible History*, vol. iv. chap. viii.
,, 33, ,, 1. 1 Sam. xiv.
,, 33, ,, 2. 1 Sam. xx. 2.
,, 34, ,, 1. 1 Sam. xviii. 1.
,, 34, ,, 2. 1 Sam. xviii. 4.
,, 34, ,, 3. 1 Sam. xx. 3.
,, 34, ,, 4. 1 Sam. xx. 8.
,, 36, ,, 1. 1 Sam. chap. xx.
,, 37, ,, 1. 2 Sam. i. 25, 26.
,, 37, ,, 2. 1 Sam. chap. xx.-xxiii. (inclusive).
,, 39, ,, 1. 1 Sam. xxii. 23.
,, 40, ,, 1. Comp. Title of Ps. lvi., also Ps. xxxiv.
,, 40, ,, 2. Comp. Edersheim, *Bible Hist.*, vol. iv. chap. xii.
,, 40, ,, 3. *Ibid.*
,, 41, ,, 1. 1 Sam. xxii. 1, 2.
,, 41, ,, 2. Comp. 1 Chron. xi. 10, 15, 20, 21.
,, 41, ,, 3. 1 Sam. xxii. 3, 4.
,, 42, ,, 1. 1 Chron. xi. 17, 18, 19.
,, 42, ,, 2. 1 Sam. xxii. 5.
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,, 46, ,, 1. 1 Sam. chap. xxiv., xxv. and xxvi.
,, 46, ,, 2. Called also Hazazour Tamar, 2 Chron. xx. 2; comp. Gen. xiv. 7; comp. Cant. i. 14. One of the oldest cities of the world.
,, 47, ,, 1. 1 Sam. xxiv. 8-22.

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„ 70, „ 1. 1 Chron. xix. 1-7.
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„ 72, „ 1. Also called Baale in 2 Sam. vi. 2. It should be *to*, not *from*, Baale, comp. 1 Chron. xiii. 6. Edersheim, *Bible Hist.*, vol. iv. p. 171, note.
„ 72, „ 2. 2 Sam. vi. 1-5.
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